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Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/227 and 52/12 B

Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. The present report responds to Economic and Social Council decision 1997/322, in which the Council decided to continue its consideration of the agenda item on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/227 and requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the question to the Council for consideration at its substantive session of 1998. The mandate, given by the Assembly in its resolution 45/264, for an annual report of the Secretary-General on restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields is also covered in this report.

2. In section I of the report a number of recommendations are made for consideration by the Council with respect to the further implementation of the various provisions of Assembly resolution 50/227. Section II provides information on efforts made by the Assembly and the Council in implementing relevant provisions of the resolution and, where appropriate, also with respect to the provisions contained in General Assembly resolution 52/12 B. The status of implementation of resolution 50/227 is provided in two columns; the left-hand column contains paragraphs of resolution 50/227 that call for action; the right-hand column presents the status of follow-up corresponding to each action-oriented paragraph. The paragraphs of resolution 50/227 that specifically address the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund (UNDP/UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP) (paras. 76-78) are treated in section IV in order to provide the Council with a clear comparison between the executive boards in their implementation of those paragraphs, which primarily concern their working methods.

3. Some of the provisions of Assembly resolution 50/227 were addressed to the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on an Agenda for Development and the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System. Both working groups completed their work, which culminated in the adoption by the Assembly of resolutions 51/240 and 51/241, respectively. The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Assembly resolution 51/241 (A/52/855) was submitted to the Assembly in May 1998.

II. Recommendations

4. The recommendations set out below are intended to promote further implementation of Assembly resolution 50/227. They concern (a) the General Assembly; (b) documentation; (c) the Economic and Social Council; (d) inter-agency coordination; and (e) the relationship between the United Nations and the international finance and trade institutions. Following each recommendation, the corresponding paragraph number from resolution 50/227, annex I, on which the proposed recommendation is based, is provided in parentheses where applicable.

Recommendations:

(a) General Assembly

(i) Informal sessions should continue in the form of an open interactive dialogue, including with civil society (para. 19).

(ii) Ways of strengthening cooperation between the Second and Third Committees should continue to be explored, including the possibility of joint consideration of common issues such as poverty, women and development, and the right to development. The bureaux of the Second and Third Committees

could draw lessons from the experiences of the two bureaux of the fifty-second session (para. 21).

(iii) Texts of resolutions could be further streamlined and made more focused, concrete and operational. Submission of omnibus draft resolutions could be encouraged. Another way of making decisions more concrete and operational would be to relate the type of outcome to the kind of mandate it generates, e.g., work programme for the secretariat, policy guidance to the United Nations system, recommendations to Governments, and so forth (para. 24).

(iv) To ensure that the formal debates have value added and do not overlap and repeat debates elsewhere in the system, a few areas of focus could be identified under various agenda items or a few items could be identified for strategic focus in the debates instead of having a formal debate on each item on the agenda, without excluding the possibility of submitting resolutions under the other agenda items (para. 27).

(b) Documentation and related matters

(v) The possibility of consolidating some of the reports that are requested every year should continue to be examined. The Second Committee has initiated the practice of reviewing, at the end of its session, all requests for reports. Such a practice could be more systematically applied to consolidating all decisions taken by an intergovernmental body with a view to providing integrated guidance for the work programme of the Secretariat and leading to consolidated documentation for intergovernmental consideration (para. 34).

(vi) Decisions could be made on the recommendations on the simplification of existing reporting requirements made by the Secretary-General in his reports (A/50/697 and Corr.1, sect. F, and A/51/501, sect. C), taking into account the reports that will be required for the follow-up to United Nations conferences (para. 35).

(c) Economic and Social Council

(vii) The Economic and Social Council may wish to build on the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations in paragraph 39 of annex I to Assembly resolution 50/227 regarding periodic meetings with the bureaux and the secretariats of the functional commissions, other subsidiary and related bodies and the relevant executive boards. The Council may also wish to consider how further progress can be made, taking into account the Secretary-General's reform proposals (A/51/950, para. 134), concerning the Council's organization and methods of work, including the idea of holding its various segments at different pre-established periods during the year, without affecting the total duration of the meetings held by the Council in any given year, and the idea of extending the duration of the operational activities segment.

(viii) As proposed in the report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to conferences (E/1998/19), the Council may wish to encourage all functional commissions to consider including in their agenda a standing item on follow-up to the agreed conclusions of the Council to ensure that the agreed conclusions of the high-level and coordination segments are followed up systematically by the United Nations system (para. 44).

(ix) It may be possible to further streamline and regroup the agenda items in the general segment with the aim of making the council's review of the work of its functional commissions more in line with its managerial and oversight functions and with the objectives of Assembly resolution 50/227. Such an effort

would need to take into account the outcome of the Council's review of its subsidiary bodies. Consideration could also be given to the possibility of having a standing item on the council's agenda on the review of the work of the functional commissions, under which the Council could carry out its responsibility of harmonizing and coordinating their work programmes (paras. 66-67).

(d) Inter-agency coordination

(x) The Council could give consideration to further steps that could be taken to implement the provisions of Assembly resolution 51/240 (the Agenda for Development) regarding inter-agency coordination with a view to (a) engaging the specialized agencies and United Nations funds and programmes in a focused dialogue with the Council to identify ways and means of reflecting the policies and priorities agreed to by the General Assembly in their activities and enhancing coherence and complementarity of efforts of all bodies, taking into account the role of the funds and programmes; ways could also be identified to include the intergovernmental bodies of the agencies in such a dialogue; and (b) improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the Council's activities by enhancing the availability of all relevant information and analyses on system-wide issues from the specialized agencies, including the provision of reports and studies to the Assembly through the Council, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

(e) Relationship between the United Nations and international finance and trade institutions

(xi) The General Assembly and the respective governing bodies of the Bretton Woods institutions, based on the conclusions of the joint exploratory review,[1] could consider further concrete areas and forms of collaboration in the field of development-related activities. The Council may wish to consider appropriate steps to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions in the light of the review (paras. 86-87).

(xii) The Council may wish to review the format and modalities of future meetings of the high-level special meeting proximate to the semi-annual meetings of the Bretton Woods institutions, based on the experience of the first meeting (para. 88).

III. Progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/227

5. The present section contains information on the status of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/227. The dual column layout has been provided for ease of reference. It should be noted that the left-hand column does not necessarily follow the relevant paragraphs of annex I to resolution 50/227 sequentially. Where deemed appropriate, paragraphs that were seen as addressing similar issues have been grouped together in order to provide the Council with a clearer picture of the status of implementation on related matters. Furthermore, the paragraphs on primarily working methods, addressed to the executive boards of the funds and programmes, are treated separately in section IV.

Provisions of General Assembly resolution 50/227, annex I	*Implementation*
I. Funding of operational activities for development of the United Nations system	
... all aspects of funding of United Nations operational activities ... should be examined by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in accordance with their respective mandates (para. 9).	Pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 50/227, 52/12 B and 52/203, the executive boards of United Nations funds and programmes have been reviewing their current funding arrangements and have developed proposals to halt the decline of their core and non-core resources. The report of the Secretary-General on the 1998 triennial comprehensive policy review of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system (E/1998/48) covers the recent consideration of the subject of core and non-core funding by the executive boards of the funds and programmes. It will be recalled that the Secretary-General, in his report to the Council at its substantive session of 1997 (E/1997/65/Add.1) and his report to the General Assembly (A/52/431), updating the report to the Council, provided detailed information on this issue. Furthermore, in response to Assembly resolution 52/12 B, the issue was discussed more extensively in a note by the Secretary-General (A/52/847), addressing current funding arrangements and the action taken by the executive boards of funds and programmes.
... the Economic and Social Council should consider, on an annual basis in the operational activities segment, the overall financial picture of the funds and programmes ... and make recommendations thereon to the General Assembly and the funds and programmes (para. 11).	
The governing bodies of each programme and fund ... shall adopt ... a specific and realistic target for core resources ... in accordance with relevant decisions taken by the Assembly and the Council, the governing bodies of each programme and fund shall take decisions on their own funding arrangements (para. 12).	
II. General Assembly	
The Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System should be encouraged to consider ... promoting the use of innovative mechanisms, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly ... (para. 19).	The use of innovative mechanisms continued to be promoted, which gave additional impetus to a more focused debate in the Committees. In the Second Committee, 13 executive briefings were held by heads of departments, agencies, funds and programmes. The Secretary-General gave a special address on the implementation of the Agenda for Development. Panel discussions with experts from outside the United Nations were held on international migration and population issues and on finance and development issues in emerging markets. A video-conference on the fiftieth anniversary of the Havana conference enabled the Second Committee to interact with a panel organized by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Geneva. Keynote addresses were given on the international conference on development finance and on the role of public policy in a globalizing economy. The Third Committee also had numerous informal briefings by high-level Secretariat officials and special representatives and rapporteurs, which were considered to be highly useful.
The Secretariat and representatives of the specialized agencies are requested to provide executive briefings, as appropriate, on the matters to be covered under the items on the agenda, at least a week prior to the opening of the General Assembly (para. 31).	

Provisions of General Assembly resolution 50/227, annex I	*Implementation*
There is a need to promote greater coherence and complementarity between the work of the Second and Third Committees (para. 21).	At the fifty-second session of the Assembly, the Bureaux of the Second and Third Committees met to review their respective programmes of work in order to exchange information on the issues discussed in each and to identify potential areas of overlap or duplication. The two Committees held joint briefings on common themes such as poverty, and children and development.
There is a need to consider possible measures to allow for the coordinated consideration of the report of the Economic and Social Council during the General Assembly session (para. 22).	The report of the Economic and Social Council is considered in four of the Main Committees and in plenary meetings. In this regard, consultations between the Bureau of the Council and the Bureaux of the Second and Third Committees took place to discuss the coordinated consideration of the report. Significant improvements have been made in the structure and presentation of the report of the Council to better assist the Assembly in its deliberations. Efforts to make the report more user-friendly and accessible will continue.
To the extent feasible, the discussions in the Second and Third Committees should not commence until after the end of the general debate in the plenary meetings of the General Assembly (para. 23).	The discussions in the Second and Third Committees commenced after the end of the general debate in the plenary meetings of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.
For issues of a procedural nature, decisions, instead of resolutions, should be used to the maximum extent possible. Resolutions should be shorter, in particular as regards preambular parts. The bureaux, in reviewing the respective agendas, could identify and recommend those individual items or clusters of related items that could be effectively considered in omnibus resolutions (para. 24).	The number of resolutions in the Second Committee was dramatically reduced from 46 in 1994 to 28 in 1996 but slightly increased to 31 in 1997. The Third Committee also achieved a significant reduction in its number of resolutions, from 71 in 1994 to 63 in 1996, but reversed the trend with an increase to 69 in 1997. In most cases their length, in particular of preambular parts, was shortened, in conformity with Assembly resolution 50/227.
... for issues dealing with special economic assistance to individual countries, each resolution could contain ... a common preambular section, while specificity (individual needs) would be maintained within a number of operative paragraphs (para. 26).	General Assembly resolution 52/169 on special economic assistance consists of 13 parts (A-M); each part, however, has its own preambular section.

Provisions of General Assembly resolution 50/227, annex I	*Implementation*
To facilitate discussions based on an integrated approach to development issues, the possibility of choosing a principal theme or themes should be explored to focus substantive debate under each "cluster" in the agenda without prejudice to the right of delegations to raise any other specific issue in the debates (para. 27).	By its resolution 51/241, the Assembly provided for further steps to be taken to rationalize and streamline the agenda, based on the Guidelines on the Rationalization of the Agenda of the General Assembly agreed to by the Assembly in annex I to its resolution 48/264 and, in particular, to make greater use of clustering, biennialization or triennialization of agenda items. The Second Committee began clustering items on its agenda at the fortieth session. In recent years its agenda has undergone a series of modifications pursuant to the provisions of Assembly resolution 50/227. The Second Committee in 1997 made a further attempt to identify subthemes to focus the debate under clusters and subclusters of the agenda at informal consultations organized before the start of the general debate. The Third Committee at the end of each session devotes one or two meetings to a full discussion of its agenda and measures to improve its modus operandi. The work of the Third Committee, organized in two clusters (social and related issues; and human rights and related issues), has been streamlined progressively without diminishing the political relevance of the sensitive issues on the agenda. Informal consultations were held before the start of the general debate in accordance with Assembly resolution 50/227.
Consultations should be held at an early stage, in an organizational session of the Committee, before the start of its general debate, based on proposals from the bureau for decision, on clustering of the agenda, and, where possible, themes and focus for these clusters, taking into account the content of reports presented, as well as on items to be included for discussion or items for decisions and resolutions without formal debate (para. 28).	
III. Documentation and related matters	
The Second Committee should, in accordance with Assembly resolution 48/162, look early in the session into all aspects related to the improvement of the working methods of the Committee (para. 31).	Before the opening of the general debate in 1997, the Chairman of the Second Committee convened informal consultations to discuss ways to improve the working methods of the Committee. Matters discussed included time limits for interventions, deadlines for the submission of resolutions under the various items, the timely start of each meeting, and proposed themes to focus interventions under clusters or subclusters of items, as well as informal briefings and panels parallel to the Committee.

Provisions of General Assembly resolution 50/227, annex I	*Implementation*
There should be greater use of relevant background documents in the Second Committee, such as the *World Economic and Social Survey*, the *Trade and Development Report*, the *World Development Report* and the *World Economic Outlook*; in the preparation of the first two reports, cooperation and coordination between the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis and the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development should be enhanced to ensure more complementarity between the reports (para. 32).	The *World Economic and Social Survey*, will be available for the high-level segment of the Council and an update is submitted to the Second Committee. In addition, the *Trade and Development Report* and the *World Development Report* will be made available to the Second Committee. The *World Economic Outlook* is issued twice a year, in May and October. The consolidation of the three departments in the economic and social areas into a single Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the establishment of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs have facilitated more effective cooperation and coordination in the preparation of these reports and have resulted in enhanced complementarity between them. In particular, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UNCTAD have reached a common understanding, including on the preparation of a joint year-end assessment and forecast on the world economy, the *World Economic and Social Survey* and the *Trade and Development Report*, which has been approved by the Secretary-General as part of the United Nations programme of reform.
There should be continued improvement of other reports to make them more concise and action-oriented, by highlighting the critical areas requiring action by the General Assembly and, as appropriate, by making specific recommendations. All documentation should be provided within the specified timetables and page limits and in all official United Nations languages. Efforts should also continue to be made to have all documentation available in electronic form, in particular for distribution on the Internet, in a timely manner and within existing resources (para. 33).	It will be recalled that the Assembly in its resolution 52/214 requested the Secretary-General to direct all departments to include, where appropriate (a) a summary of the report; (b) consolidated conclusions, recommendations and other proposed actions; and © relevant background information. In its resolution 51/241, the Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to pursue an information technology plan with a range of options to provide all permanent missions to the United Nations and the wider public with on-line access to documents and relevant United Nations information. Documents and reports have increasingly been made available in the Optical Disk System and on the Internet in an advance unedited form. The Secretary-General, in his reform proposal (A/51/950, para. 247), indicated that he would take actions to enhance the production and dissemination of documents through electronic means. The Technical Subgroup of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics, chaired by Mr. Ahmad Kamal (Pakistan), has also continued its work on related issues.

Provisions of General Assembly resolution 50/227, annex I	*Implementation*
In order to rationalize and simplify reporting procedures, the Second and Third Committees shall, at the end of their sessions, while reviewing their draft programmes of work for the next sessions, consider procedural decisions regarding requests for reports, including where possible integrated reports on closely related items, as well as items to be inscribed on the agendas for the next sessions ... (para. 34).	Progress thus far in implementing this provision has been limited. The Second Committee, at its previous session, initiated the practice of reviewing all requests for reports. It will be recalled that the Assembly, in its resolution 51/241, requested that all bodies exercise restraint in making proposals containing requests for new reports and consider integrating, biennializing or triennializing the presentation of reports, bearing in mind paragraphs 6 and 7 of General Assembly resolution 50/206 C.
It is noted that the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to prepare proposals, for consideration by the Council in 1996 and by the General Assembly at its fifty-first session, on the simplification of existing reporting requirements, taking into account the reports that will be required for the follow-up to United Nations conferences (para. 35).	The Secretary-General elaborated on this matter in detail in his progress report to the Assembly at its fiftieth session (A/50/697 and Corr.1, sect. F) and reaffirmed the recommendations in his reports to the Assembly at its fifty-first session (A/51/501, sect. C) and its fifty-second session (A/52/155). It will be recalled that the Assembly in its resolution 51/241 decided that the number of reports requested shall be rationalized where possible so as to permit more focused consideration of issues.
IV. Economic and Social Council	
In the follow-up to United Nations conferences, the Council shall ensure the harmonization and coordination of the agendas and work programmes of the functional commissions by promoting a clearer division of labour among them and providing clear policy guidance to them ... The Council could periodically organize meetings on specific issues to allow for more dialogue with the chairpersons and the secretariats ... of the functional commissions, other subsidiary and related bodies and the relevant executive boards ... (para. 39).	The Bureau of the Council held consultations with the bureaux and the secretariats of the functional commissions on strengthening links among functional commissions in the integrated follow-up to global conferences, streamlining efforts for the overall review of the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women in the year 2000, follow-up to the recommendations of the Council and ensuring continuity of the bureaux of the functional commissions. The Council, at its session in May 1998, held a panel meeting with chairpersons of the functional commissions to discuss coordination issues in the integrated follow-up to conferences as well as with the Chairpersons of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF (see also E/1998/19).
The Council shall hold a shorter, focused substantive session for four weeks in July (para. 40).	This provision came into effect as of the substantive session of 1997. The Council will need to further improve its efficiency in order to accommodate the newly established humanitarian affairs segment.

Provisions of General Assembly resolution 50/227, annex I	*Implementation*
The Secretary-General is requested to prepare a study with a comprehensive assessment of the present arrangements for the Council's sessions (para. 43).	An addendum to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Assembly resolution 50/227, submitted to the Council at its substantive session of 1997, examined the difference in cost between holding meetings of the Council in New York and Geneva (A/52/155/Add.1-E/1997/68/Add.1). The Council has planned to hold informal consultations under the chairmanship of its Vice-President Mr. Roble Olhaye (Djibouti) on the Council's working methods, including the proposals for reform made by the Secretary-General (A/51/950, para. 134).
The outcome of each segment of the Council should be strengthened and made more action-oriented. Resolutions, decisions and agreed conclusions should be implemented and followed up fully by all relevant parts of the United Nations system. This process should be monitored by the Council and the General Assembly on a regular basis, as appropriate (para. 44).	The high-level segment resulted in agreed conclusions for the first time at the Council's 1997 substantive session, which were brought to the attention of relevant parts of the United Nations system. The agreed conclusions adopted at the coordination segment were also brought to the attention of the United Nations system; a follow-up report is submitted to the Council. The outcomes of the 1998 high-level and coordination segments are expected to take the form of agreed conclusions and would need to be followed up by all relevant bodies and organizations of the United Nations system.
The theme for the general debate of the high-level segment shall be determined ... (para. 53).	Proposals for a theme for 1999 will be submitted to the Council at its substantive session of 1998.
The Secretary-General is requested to include in his report for the high-level segment all relevant issues that could be discussed during the session ... making use of inputs from the various pertinent bodies of the United Nations system ... (para. 54). In order to better focus the policy dialogue, the possibility of having joint reports, prepared by the secretariats of the United Nations, UNCTAD, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, should be explored (para. 55).	The report of the Secretary-General on the theme of the 1998 high-level segment "Market access: developments since the Uruguay Round, implications, opportunities and challenges, in particular for the developing countries and the least developed among them, in the context of globalization and liberalization" was jointly prepared by the secretariats of UNCTAD and the World Trade Organization. The report entitled "Fostering an enabling environment for development: financial flows, including capital flows; investment; trade" (E/1997/67), submitted to the Council at its high-level segment of 1997, was prepared in close consultation with the Bretton Woods institutions.

Provisions of General Assembly resolution 50/227, annex I	*Implementation*
The outcome of the high-level segment should normally be in the form of agreed conclusions and should be followed up by all relevant bodies and organizations of the United Nations system (para. 56).	(See also implementation concerning para. 44, above.) The agreed conclusions have been brought to the attention of all relevant bodies and organizations of the system and to the General Assembly as part of the annual report of the Council to the Assembly. In its resolution 52/182, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in collaboration with the secretariat of UNCTAD, to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session on recommendations for effective follow-up to the relevant sections of agreed conclusions 1997/1 of the Economic and Social Council on fostering an enabling environment for development. The Assembly furthermore requested the Secretary-General, in collaboration with the secretariat of UNCTAD, to report orally on the implementation of Assembly resolution 52/182, including developments in the multilateral trading system. These reports will be presented to the Assembly as requested.
The agreed conclusions of the Council concerning the selection of cross-cutting themes common to major international conferences and/or the contribution to an overall review of the implementation of the programme of action of a United Nations conference should be implemented. At the organizational session of the Council, consideration should be given to choosing a second theme dealing with concrete sectoral issues ... (para. 57).	The Council, by its decision 1997/319, decided on the theme for the coordination segment of its 1998 substantive session: "Coordinated follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action". No second theme was chosen.
The implementation of the agreed conclusions of the coordination segment should be followed up in the general segment of the following year (para. 59).	The provision that the implementation of the agreed conclusions of the coordination segment should be followed up in the general segment of the following year has been implemented since the substantive session of 1997.
The primary function of the general segment as that of an action-oriented review of the activities, reports and recommendations of the Council's subsidiary bodies should be consolidated, avoiding a repetition of the debates held in those bodies and focusing attention on major policy issues that require a prioritized and coordinated response from the United Nations system as a whole (para. 66).	The Secretary-General, in his reform proposal (A/51/950), noted that the general segment should be more focused and policy-oriented, giving sufficient attention to the linkages between the reports of the subsidiary bodies. A consolidated report on the reports of subsidiary bodies will be submitted to the Council to assist its coordination role by highlighting the linkages between the activities of subsidiary bodies and major policy issues arising from them.
The Council should regularly review the agenda of its general segment with a view to discontinuing consideration of items that are not relevant to the work of its subsidiary machinery or are duplicative of items on the agenda of the General Assembly, and distinguish more clearly between items on the agenda requiring decisions and those for information only (para. 67).	The Council reviewed its agenda and related documentation requirements at its organizational session in February 1998.

Provisions of General Assembly resolution 50/227, annex I	*Implementation*
The subsidiary bodies should be requested to include in their reports an executive summary ... and the issues that may require attention and/or action by the Council. The Secretariat should consolidate these issues in a single document ... (para. 68).	All reports of the subsidiary bodies include an executive summary. A consolidated report on the outcomes of the functional commissions is submitted to the Council.
The arrangements in the General Assembly and in the Economic and Social Council for considering the coordination of humanitarian assistance and special economic assistance to individual countries and regions should be reviewed during the fifty-first session of the General Assembly (para. 25).	The Assembly by its resolution 52/12 B decided to establish a humanitarian affairs segment of the Council, with effect from 1998, and, in this connection, requested the Council to consider expeditiously the related practical arrangements and make an early recommendation to the Assembly, without prejudice to the work of the other segments of the Council. The Council will hold a humanitarian affairs segment for two days during its substantive session of 1998, on the understanding that this year's practice will not set any precedent for future sessions.
Provision should be made for the integration and coordination of humanitarian and emergency assistance activities ... (para. 69).	
V. Functional and regional commissions and expert groups	
The Council shall undertake ... a review of the mandates, composition, functions and working methods of its functional commissions and expert groups and bodies, ensuring more effective and coordinated discussions and outcomes of their work ... Such a review should be completed by the fifty-second session of the General Assembly ... (paras. 70 and 71).	The Assembly in its resolution 52/12 B invited the Council to consider, at its organizational and substantive sessions in 1998, as part of the review as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 50/227, the recommendations of the Secretary-General relating to the reform of its subsidiary bodies and to report thereon to the Assembly as early as possible during its fifty-second session. Informal consultations have been under way since March 1998 under the chairmanship of the Vice-President of the Council, Mr. Anwarul Karim Chowdhury (Bangladesh), to continue the review of the four priority bodies,[2] the functional commissions with responsibilities for follow-up to major conferences, other subsidiary bodies and the regional commissions. The outcome of the informal consultations is to be reported to the Council at its substantive session of 1998.

Provisions of General Assembly resolution 50/227, annex I	*Implementation*
The Council shall provide for the review of the regional commissions, with a view to strengthening and enhancing their effectiveness as action- and policy-oriented bodies in the economic and development fields with better response to the conditions and environments unique to the specific regions; improving their coordination with the entire United Nations system, including the specialized agencies, the Bretton Woods institutions and the regional development banks; strengthening their active participation relating to the implementation at the regional level of the results of major United Nations conferences; and encouraging them also to undertake their own management and functional assessments towards these ends ... (paras. 74-75).	The Assembly in its resolution 52/12 B also invited the Council, in consultation with Member States and appropriate intergovernmental regional bodies, to conduct a general review of the regional commissions at its substantive session of 1998, bearing in mind the relevant provisions of Assembly resolution 50/227 and the individual reviews each commission has already carried out, in order to consider the competencies of the regional commissions, taking into account the competencies of global bodies and other regional and subregional intergovernmental bodies, and to submit a report thereon to the General Assembly before the end of its fifty-second session. The Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions briefed the delegations regarding the reform exercise undertaken in their respective commissions. The report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation addresses the review of the regional commissions (see E/1998/65). Informal consultations under the chairmanship of the Vice-President of the Council, Mr. Anwarul Karim Chowdhury (Bangladesh) will be held to examine the issue.
VI. Governing bodies of the United Nations development programmes and funds[3]	
VII. Inter-agency coordination	
In the context of the discussions on an agenda for development, a close review shall be made of the relationship of the Economic and Social Council with the specialized agencies (para. 79).	The Assembly by its resolution 51/240 adopted the Agenda for Development.[4] The Council's interaction with the specialized agencies and the funds and programmes takes place in many forms. At the session of the Council held from 13 to 15 May 1998 on the coordinated follow-up to conferences, the Council had an intensive dialogue with panels composed of agencies that had chaired the inter-agency task forces (the World Bank, the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Population Fund). The specialized agencies participate regularly in the Council's discussions on issues of common concern. The agencies also propose specific items for the Council's agenda. The Council could invite, from time to time, executive heads and the chairpersons of the governing bodies of specialized agencies to interact with it on system-wide coordination and cooperation issues.

Provisions of General Assembly resolution 50/227, annex I	*Implementation*
The Administrative Committee on Coordination should present the thematic aspects of its report to the Council at its coordination segment and the remaining parts at the general segment; the members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination should engage in an active dialogue with the Council on ways to improve inter-agency coordination (para. 81).	In response to the Council's request for regular briefings on the outcomes of sessions of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), the Secretary-General addressed the Council at its organizational session for 1998 and a further briefing was given at the resumed organizational session of the Council in May. The annual overview report of ACC for 1997 (E/1998/21) is to be considered during the general segment of the Council under the item on coordination, programme and other questions. This could be an important occasion for forging stronger links between the Council and ACC by engaging in more substantive interaction with ACC members, using the report before the Council as the main basis for the discussion.
The periodic meetings of all concerned senior secretariat officials in the economic and social sectors, under the authority of the Secretary-General, should continue to be used to improve coordination and performance; the outcomes of these meetings should be presented on a regular basis to the Economic and Social Council (para. 82).	The Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs and the Executive Committee of the United Nations Development Group meet regularly to promote effective coordination among the substantive departments of the Secretariat and operational bodies. The Senior Management Group, comprising the convenors of the four executive committees (peace and security, humanitarian affairs, economic and social affairs and development) and additional senior managers, continues to meet on a regular basis as the Secretary-General's cabinet and the central policy planning body.
VIII. Relationship between the United Nations and international finance and trade institutions	
The issues relating to the strengthening of the relationship between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, and possibly also the World Trade Organization, shall be particularly considered in the context of the deliberations on an agenda for development ... (para. 84).	The Agenda for Development addressed the need for increased interaction and cooperation between the United Nations and multilateral development institutions, including the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, and the need to develop further effective and innovative approaches to their interaction and cooperation (General Assembly resolution 51/240, paras. 276-282).
There is a need for an early exploratory review to be prepared jointly by the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions ... with a view to identifying areas in which communication, cooperation and coordination could be improved. ... The General Assembly and the respective governing bodies of the Bretton Woods institutions, based on the conclusions of the above review, should consider concrete areas and forms of collaboration in the field of development-related activities (paras. 86-87).	The review was led by the UNDP Administrator in collaboration with United Nations departments, funds and programmes and in cooperation with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The report of the Secretary-General on the review is before the Council at its present session (E/1998/61) and information on the review will be provided to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session.

Provisions of General Assembly resolution 50/227, annex I	*Implementation*
In order to improve communication and cooperation at the intergovernmental level between the Council and the international financial and trade institutions ... the Council should schedule periodically a high-level special meeting at a time proximate to the semi-annual meetings of the Bretton Woods institutions ... (para. 88).	The special high-level meeting held on 18 April 1998 following the meeting of the Development Committee of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund was the first of its kind to be convened as envisaged by the Assembly in its resolution 50/227 and the Agenda for Development (Assembly resolution 51/240, paras. 277 and 279). The Bureau of the Economic and Social Council informed the Council of the suggestions, including the format and the theme, related to the special high-level meeting. A brief background note (E/1998/9) identifying issues and questions on the theme "Global financial integration and development and recent issues" was prepared by the United Nations in collaboration with the Bank and the Fund. The meeting was generally considered to be a success; it was well attended by ministers and senior officials dealing with finance, economic and development cooperation matters and generated a lively and substantive dialogue in an informal atmosphere and received good press coverage.
IX. Secretariat	
The present structure and functioning of the Secretariat, including the economic and social departments and the question of establishing a post of Deputy Secretary-General for International Cooperation and Development, shall be considered in the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System and in the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on an Agenda for Development (para. 89).	The Assembly, by its resolution 52/12 B, decided to establish the post of Deputy Secretary-General and the appointment was made by the Secretary-General following consultations with Member States and in accordance with Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations. The three departments concerned with economic and social development issues (Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis and Department for Development Support and Management Services) have been consolidated into a single Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
In the context of the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System, uniform and maximum terms of service for heads of programmes and funds and other Economic and Social Council and General Assembly bodies should be considered ... (para. 90).	It will be recalled that in resolution 51/241, the Assembly, having affirmed its role in approving appointments and extension of terms, stated that uniform terms of office of four years, renewable once, should be introduced for the executive heads of programmes, funds and other bodies of the Assembly and the Council. The Assembly also encouraged the specialized agencies to consider uniform terms and term limits for their executive heads. The Secretary-General, in his report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 51/241, concurred with the above-mentioned decision; the position of the Assembly will be brought to the attention of the agencies concerned (see A/52/855, paras. 64-65).

IV. Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme

6. Paragraphs 76 to 78 of annex I to General Assembly resolution 50/227 contain provisions for the governing bodies of the United Nations programmes and funds. In paragraph 76, the Assembly requested that the executive boards consider adjustments to their agendas, reporting procedures and format, and that they review the number and scheduling of meetings and sessions, with a view to continuing the rationalization of the working methods of the boards. In paragraph 77, the Assembly asked the governing bodies to describe in their reports how the overall policy guidance and coordination provided by the Assembly and the Council had been implemented, and to give specific recommendations for further action. In paragraph 78, the Assembly requested that the effective participation of observer member States and observer States in the sessions of the executive boards be facilitated and that the arrangements, working methods and rules of procedure be reviewed. The efforts made by the executive boards to respond to these recommendations are summarized below.

	UNDP/UNFPA	*UNICEF*	*WFP*
Implementation of guidance from the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council	The Executive Board, in its decision 97/15 entitled "Change management", adopted at the annual session of 1997, recalled the legal framework of UNDP,[5] as well as General Assembly resolutions 47/199 and 50/120 on operational activities for development, and stressed the importance of their full implementation; the Board also welcomed measures taken by UNDP to improve its capacity to support the resident coordinator system, within the context of General Assembly resolutions 32/197, 44/211, 47/199 and 50/120. The Executive Board reviewed and took note of the report on follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/56 on Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations. In follow-up to General Assembly resolution 50/120 and Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/42, the format for harmonization of presentation of the biennial support budgets of UNDP and UNFPA was approved by the Executive Board at its first regular session of 1997. The Executive Board, by its decision 97/14 on the five-year review of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), invited the President of the Executive Board to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session, through the Economic and Social Council, a proposal for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action.	At its first regular session, the Executive Board discussed the follow-up to the Council's resolutions related to operational activities of the United Nations for development, as input to the Council's substantive session of 1998.[6] The Executive Board also approved the biennial support budget for 1998-1999, the first prepared according to the harmonized presentation format agreed to by the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF, and the 1998 work plan. The Executive Board requested the secretariat to work with the UNDP and UNFPA secretariats to further assess and develop the harmonized budget presentation. At the annual session in June, the Executive Board is to have the opportunity to review the follow-up of major United Nations conferences and summits, with particular emphasis on the World Summit for Children and ICPD; it will also review the status of implementation of the Management Excellence Programme of UNICEF, as well as the status of implementation of some of the major organizational policies and strategies.[9] The Board will also consider a draft policy on information, publications and communication.	The revised General Regulations of WFP[7] were endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 1997/217 and by the FAO Council at its 112th session, and were approved by the FAO Conference (resolution 11/97) and by the General Assembly in its decision 52/449. The new General Regulations of WFP entered into effect on 1 January 1998.[8] The revised Financial Regulations were approved provisionally, effective 1 January 1998. The Board decided that the Financial Regulations would be reconfirmed once the General Regulations were adopted by the General Assembly and the FAO Conference. Reaching an agreement on the adjustments needed for its long-term resource and financing policies remains a challenge on the WFP's reform agenda; the set of policies approved by the governing body in 1995, which came into effect in 1996, is being reviewed through informal consultations with the Board.

	UNDP/UNFPA	*UNICEF*	*WFP*
Number and scheduling of meetings and sessions	The Executive Board continued to rationalize its working methods in 1997 and early 1998. Three regular sessions and one annual session were held in 1997, with the same planned for 1998. In 1997, 39 informal meetings were held, often with the purpose of providing a forum for consultations which would allow for more efficient formal sessions of the Board. In 1998, it was decided that, to the extent possible, the first regular session would be devoted to UNDP matters while the second regular session would be devoted to UNFPA matters, an example of further rationalization of the Board's working methods. An unprecedented joint session of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF was held on 26 January 1998 to review the progress in implementing United Nations reform at the country level. The secretariats of the two bodies continue to work closely in scheduling the meetings of the Boards, and in identifying possible areas of common interest for future joint sessions of the Boards. Consecutive meetings of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF have been scheduled whenever possible.	The Executive Board discussed and agreed to the programme of work at its third regular session of September 1997. The number of Board sessions was reduced from four in 1997 to three in 1998, with the clustering of related issues into sessions. It was decided that the burden of work of the Board for the year would guide the number of sessions. The 1999 work plan issue will be decided at the second regular session, in September 1998. The UNICEF secretariat continues to schedule pre-Board information meetings some weeks before each Board session, to allow more time for follow-up consultation between New York delegations and their capitals, and between delegations and the secretariat.	Consistent with General Assembly resolution 48/162, the former WFP governing body, the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes, was replaced by an Executive Board, effective 1 January 1996. The Board has 36 members and holds one annual session and three regular sessions a year. Each year at its first regular session, the Executive Board elects a Bureau of five members, one from each WFP electoral list.
Agendas and organization of work	An annual work plan for the Executive Board was initiated with the approval of the work plan for 1997 at the first regular session of 1997. When possible, items of concern to both UNDP and UNFPA were considered jointly (e.g., work plan for 1997, harmonization of presentation of budgets, reports to the Economic and Social Council and internal oversight and accountability).	In 1998, the UNICEF Executive Board has 23 items on its work programme for the year, down from 33 in 1997. These items are organized into one annual (1-5 June) and two regular sessions (26-28 and 30 January and 8-11 September).	The WFP Executive Board now routinely establishes an annual work programme for the forthcoming year at its previous regular session. The annual work programme includes a tentative schedule of sessions and pre-session briefings; the Bureau of the board is consulted on the need for working groups.

	UNDP/UNFPA	*UNICEF*	*WFP*
Participation of observers	The UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board rules of procedure, adopted at the annual session of 1997, provide for the following in rule 16, paragraph 1: "Any State member of UNDP or UNFPA who is not a member of the Executive Board may attend Board meetings and, based on General Assembly resolutions 48/162 and 50/227, which, *inter alia*, call for the facilitation of the effective participation of observer Member States and observer States, may participate in its deliberations without the right to vote."	As required by Assembly resolution 48/162 and the rules of procedure of the UNICEF Executive Board, observer delegations have the right to participate in all formal and informal meetings and to receive all Board documentation contained in the daily list of documents, issued at Headquarters. Starting in the summer of 1997, advance copies of Board documents are now posted in the UNICEF Intranet for member and observer countries, UNICEF national committees and country offices.	The WFP Executive Board has stipulated that member States who manifest a special interest in the item or items being discussed may be invited to participate in the deliberations without the right to vote. In addition, representatives of appropriate United Nations bodies are invited to all sessions of the board. Other organizations with a special interest may also be invited, at their request, to attend sessions.[10]
Reporting and documentation	At its third regular session of 1996, the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board adopted decision 96/45 on documentation, in which, *inter alia*, the Board established strict page limits for documents to be submitted to the Executive Board and decided, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/206, that documents must be submitted to the Office of Conference and Support Services 10 weeks before the start of the session.	The UNICEF secretariat continues to improve the use of time during each session, and to rationalize the documents presented at each session. The page limits set for documents pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 50/11 and 50/206 are followed by the UNICEF secretariat.	Documentation is made available to all observers at their request. Since October 1996, all Executive Board documentation in all four official languages is posted on the WFP Web site. Documentation has been shortened and focuses on key decisions and action-oriented recommendations.[11] All verbatim records have been abolished.
Rules of procedure	The rules of procedure of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board were adopted by the Board at its annual session of 1997.	The revised rules of procedure adopted by the UNICEF Executive Board in 1994 continue to set the overall framework for the conduct of Board business.	The working group established in February 1998 to revise the rules of procedure to ensure consistency with all major General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions, including compliance with all reporting requirements, is expected to report to the Executive Board at its third regular session of 1998.

Notes

[1] See the report of the Secretary-General on the joint exploratory review of cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions (E/1998/61).

[2] The four priority bodies are the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, the Committee for Development Planning, the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development and the Committee on Natural Resources.

[3] See section IV of the present report.

[4] The Assembly stated in paragraphs 251 and 252 of the Agenda for Development that the Council should continue to strengthen its role as the central mechanism for coordination of the United Nations system and its specialized agencies and to ensure a coordinated follow-up to the implementation of major United Nations conferences through its subsidiary machinery and provide overall guidance and coordination to the United Nations system as a whole. The Secretary-General, in paragraph 266, was invited to make recommendations on the coordination of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies. In paragraph 267, the Assembly stated that mechanisms should be elaborated to enable the Council, within its mandate, to provide guidance to specialized agencies and to transmit institutional priorities as formulated by the Assembly and that the specialized agencies and the United Nations funds and programmes should engage in a focused dialogue with the Council with a view to identifying how their activities could be adjusted in response to such priorities; the Assembly also stated that the Council should provide appropriate recommendations in order to ensure coherence and complementarity of efforts of all bodies, taking into account the role of the funds and programmes. In paragraph 268, the Assembly pointed out that the effectiveness and efficiency of the Council's activities could be improved by increasing interaction with specialized agencies, including the provision of regular reports to the Assembly, through the Council, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter.

[5] Including General Assembly resolution 2688 (XXV) of 10 December 1970.

[6] Issues addressed include country level coordination of the funds and programmes, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, strengthening of the resident coordinator system, common premises and services, monitoring and evaluation activities, country notes, HIV/AIDS, and the follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits.

[7] During 1996 and 1997, an open-ended working group was established by the Bureau of the Executive Board of the World Food Programme to bring the General and Financial Regulations of WFP in line with the most recent decisions of the United Nations and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and to remove outdated or superseded provisions. The working group, which consisted of members from each of the five regions represented on the Board, conducted its business in close collaboration with the secretariat and relied on the advice of the WFP/FAO Legal Counsel, as well as the FAO Finance Committee and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

[8] The basic constitution of WFP and its role in the United Nations system will continue to be amended through the Economic and Social Council, the FAO Council, the FAO Conference and the General Assembly. Operational issues and points of detail, however, will henceforth not be covered in the General Regulations but in Rules, which may be amended by the Executive Board as circumstances require.

[9] Such as the health strategy adopted in 1995, the policy regarding national committees and the policies and strategies on children in need of special protection measures.

[10] Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 50/8 of 1 November 1995, the Executive Board has established a working group charged with reviewing the distribution of seats, the results of which will enter into force on 1 January 2000.

[11] At the end of each session, a brief paper containing the key decision and/or recommendations is prepared by the rapporteur and provided to Board members for endorsement. A brief summary of the work is also sent to Board members.

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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

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Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance

Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, by which the Secretary-General was required to report annually to the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the coordination of humanitarian assistance, to Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/56 of 28 July 1995, in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report on humanitarian assistance, and to Assembly resolution 52/168 of 16 December 1997, in which the Secretary-General was requested to report to the Assembly through the Council on the further progress of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in the strengthening of the capacity of the United Nations in humanitarian assistance.

2. The present report also describes the implementation of the programme of reform of the United Nations endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/12 of 12 November 1997. The reform measures discussed in the report aim primarily at strengthening the office of the Emergency Relief Coordinator through enhanced focus on three core functions: policy development and coordination; advocacy of humanitarian issues; and coordination of humanitarian emergency response.

II. Context and challenges of humanitarian assistance

3. In the past year, there has been more evidence of the disturbing trends identified in the previous report of the Secretary-General concerning humanitarian assistance (E/1997/98). There has been further erosion in the respect for humanitarian principles, both in terms of denial of access to people in need and through deliberate violence against civilians and aid workers. In addition, the level of contributions from donors to humanitarian assistance programmes has noticeably declined, with some notable exceptions. These developments are extremely worrying, and concerted steps must be taken to address them.

4. The right of civilians in need, particularly children and women, to receive humanitarian assistance is enshrined in international humanitarian law. Deliberate refusal by Governments or armed groups to allow humanitarian organizations access to assist needy people is contrary to international humanitarian principles. It is the view of the Secretary-General that the persistent and deliberate denial of the rights of victims, of whom the majority are children and women, to receive humanitarian assistance should be included in the Charter of the proposed International Criminal Court as an indictable offence.

5. It was welcome news that in May, in Afghanistan and the Sudan, the authorities agreed to grant access to humanitarian assistance to needy people in areas that had previously been denied such assistance. This is encouraging, but must become the norm. The international community must send a consistent and unambiguous message to Governments and armed groups that the right to humanitarian aid is inviolable, and that failure to honour that right will lead to appropriate and targeted measures against those responsible, including criminal prosecution.

6. Deliberate attacks on civilian populations have continued. Increasingly, such attacks have become the objective of armed conflict, rather than an unfortunate by-product. Warring parties seek to terrorize populations into leaving specific areas. Hatred and suspicion between members of different ethnic or religious groups are incited by media controlled by faction leaders. In some places violence has been perpetrated against aid workers, whose help to the innocent victims of conflict is seen as threatening the political objectives of armed groups. As such attacks constitute flagrant violations of international humanitarian law, those responsible for these attacks must be held accountable for their acts.

7. It is a matter of great concern that the international response to appeals for humanitarian assistance to victims of conflict and natural disasters has declined in both absolute and relative terms. On the positive side, the period from 1994 to 1998 has seen a steady decline in the numbers of people worldwide who are dependent on emergency humanitarian assistance. The consolidated appeals of 1994 identified a target population of 39.5 million people in need of help. Of the total funding requirements that year amounting to US$ 2,780 million, fully 80 per cent was made available by donors. By 1997, the numbers requiring assistance had fallen to some 24 million and funding requirements to $1,747 million. However, the response of donors reached only 62 per cent. In the 1998 appeals the numbers requiring help had increased slightly to 25 million, reflecting the large-scale relief effort in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and the funds required were $1,980 million. Alarmingly, however, by 15 May 1998 the average response to the consolidated appeals issued by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for 1998 was only approximately 15 per cent. At the same period in 1997 the comparable figure was 30 per cent.

8. There appear to be a number of reasons for this alarming trend. Principally, none of the emergencies now being confronted has been of a size or political significance to attract front-page media coverage. Governments must accept the responsibility for ensuring that their response to international appeals is commensurate with the needs, and not overly influenced by levels of media interest. The lack of resources for emergency programmes is having a direct impact on beneficiaries, jeopardizing, for example, return and reintegration programmes in some countries, with consequent negative impacts on stability, peace-building and reconciliation.

9. This trend comes at a time when the whole concept of "humanitarianism" is under scrutiny. There have been suggestions that, in some situations, humanitarian aid may do harm as well as good. This is a healthy debate, which should be encouraged. If it leads to the adoption of agreed principles and ground rules, accepted by all parties concerned, for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, which reduce or eliminate the risk of "collateral damage" during humanitarian operations, then it will have served an important purpose. However, this debate must not be allowed to provide excuses for inaction in the face of humanitarian need, or for lack of political will to deal with the crisis behind the emergency. On the contrary, it should help the international community to focus on the development of a fully coordinated approach to countries in crisis, in which key aspects of a recovery and peace-building programme are included.

10. During the past year, in spite of the serious funding constraints facing humanitarian organizations, as well as the worsening security environment in several areas, tangible results have been recorded in the humanitarian field. These have been the result of well-coordinated responses by the United Nations system with other international and non-governmental organizations and close collaboration with donor Governments, local authorities and civil society organizations. Notable examples include humanitarian operations in Angola, Georgia, Iraq and the Kosovo province of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Other achievements include the coordinated response to floods and natural disasters resulting from the El Niño phenomenon, and the publication of the guiding principles on internally displaced persons. It is also encouraging to note the growing recognition of the need to control the proliferation of small arms in conflict zones, with the prospect of a moratorium on the import of small arms to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region.

11. Since the previous report of the Secretary-General (E/1997/98), notable progress has been made in addressing the landmines issue. The success of the Ottawa process and progress to date in the realization of a universal ban on anti-personnel landmines are major humanitarian achievements. Equally, greater awareness of the need to take a comprehensive approach to the issue of landmines, including action that addresses the particular concerns of landmine survivors, is a positive and welcome trend.

12. There is growing recognition of the essential linkages between all aspects of external support for countries afflicted by conflict, whether political, humanitarian, developmental or human rights. The challenge is to establish joint planning and coordinating mechanisms in the field and at Headquarters that reflect this understanding. The participation of donor Governments, host Governments and non-governmental organizations in this effort is essential to its success. The Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) has given particular attention to the "strategic framework" approach, which is discussed in more detail in paragraph 67 below.

13. Finally, the El Niño phenomenon, the forest fires in Indonesia and Brazil, and the Chernobyl and Semipalatinsk nuclear disasters have reminded the international community of the vulnerability of many parts of the world to natural, environmental and technological disasters. The resources of a single country are often not sufficient to cope with the humanitarian consequences of natural catastrophes.

III. Reform of the United Nations humanitarian sector

14. In the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a reform programme" (A/51/950) significant changes were proposed in the structure and functions of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. These changes were subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly and have been introduced, with some minor adjustments of detail, in the period since.

15. In that report, the Secretary-General reaffirmed the importance of the function of the Emergency Relief Coordinator as an integral part of the United Nations Secretariat and as the focal point for the coordination of humanitarian affairs within the Secretariat. The Secretary-General outlined a number of measures to strengthen the coordination function of the Emergency Relief Coordinator and to arrest a perceived dilution of his mandate. As a result, the operational functions that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs had acquired since its establishment were transferred to other entities within the United Nations

system, a process that will be completed shortly. Specifically, the responsibility for the coordination of mine action operations was transferred to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (while the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs retained the responsibility for humanitarian advocacy on mine action issues and for ensuring that mine action initiatives were fully integrated into humanitarian programmes). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was assigned the responsibility for ensuring that the broader socio-economic consequences of landmine and unexploded ordnance contamination are reflected in development planning. The Iraq Programme was established as a separate office in the Secretariat; the Pisa warehouse is to be transferred to the World Food Programme (WFP); and responsibilities relating to the establishment of a resource centre to serve as a central depository of knowledge and experiences in demobilization and for operational activities for natural disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness were taken on by UNDP. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs retained the responsibility for the coordinating offices in Afghanistan (Office of the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for Afghanistan) and Angola (Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit).

16. Reflecting these changes the Department of Humanitarian Affairs became the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, with a focus on three core functions: policy development and coordination; advocacy of humanitarian issues; and coordination of humanitarian emergency response. The implementation of these measures has allowed a reduction in staffing by almost 50 per cent. However, in the current biennium, over 60 per cent of the Office's costs are still funded from extrabudgetary resources. Efforts will continue to be made to obtain an increase in the proportion of the Office's costs to be met from the regular budget.

17. In January 1998, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello (Brazil) was appointed to head the new Office, as Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. In this capacity, he chairs both the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the Executive Committee for Humanitarian Affairs. In the months since his appointment, the Emergency Relief Coordinator has sought to engage the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in proactive and collaborative efforts to deal with a limited number of key humanitarian issues. These include the question of internally displaced persons, the development of the consolidated appeals process as a dynamic and collaborative strategic programming exercise, the security of humanitarian workers, field coordination mechanisms, strengthening the links between human rights and humanitarian action, the introduction of a coordinated response to the humanitarian consequences of environmental and technological disasters, the use of inter-agency teams for contingency planning and to negotiate the acceptance of humanitarian principles in countries in conflict, advocacy of humanitarian issues, such as the terrible humanitarian consequences of the proliferation of small arms, and the promotion of a deeper understanding of the humanitarian impact of sanctions regimes. The progress achieved on these issues is described in the following chapters.

18. Attempts have also been made to make the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs more supportive of field activities, in particular through the expanded use of Office-led inter-agency teams to negotiate acceptance of humanitarian principles in specific situations where these are threatened, and for contingency planning. These efforts are carried out usually at the specific request of, and in close coordination with, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the Executive Committee for Humanitarian Affairs.

19. At the same time, the Under-Secretary-General has put in place the structures and working practices of the new Office. A Complex Emergency Response and Consolidated Appeals Branch and a Disaster Relief Branch for natural disasters have been put in place at Geneva. The Policy, Advocacy and Information Division and the Emergency Liaison Branch have been established in New York. The secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction remains at Geneva. To consolidate the links with the members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, and to obtain expertise that could not otherwise have been found, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has recruited on secondment from Standing Committee participants a number of staff to fill some senior positions in the new Office. This process will be completed by July 1998.

20. The reform that led to the establishment of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is an organic and dynamic process. The Office will remain responsive to the expectations of member States and members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, and will adjust its priorities and working methods to reflect the needs of the victims of complex emergencies and natural disasters. United Nations agencies are committed to supporting the Office in this endeavour, including by nominating senior members of their staff to serve as Humanitarian Coordinators when required. The guiding objectives for the Office in implementing the reforms are to improve support to, and collaboration with, the operational agencies, to enhance emergency preparedness, to strengthen United Nations advocacy of

humanitarian issues, and to promote joint planning at all stages of complex emergencies between humanitarian agencies, peace-building bodies, human rights organizations and development actors.

21. As part of the reform process, the Economic and Social Council has decided to convene a humanitarian segment beginning at its substantive session of 1998. The Secretary-General welcomes this decision and hopes that the Council will, at an appropriate time, address the longer-term issue of oversight of the coordination of the United Nations humanitarian response, as proposed in his report on reform.

IV. Progress in strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian affairs

22. In its resolution 1995/56, the Economic and Social Council requested a review of the capacity of the United Nations system in providing humanitarian assistance. In conducting that review, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee has moved towards a more strategic approach that emphasizes the importance of ensuring that humanitarian assistance contributes to the peacemaking and peace-building activities of the United Nations. In this context, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee has aimed at achieving simple and coherent coordination structures at the field level and clear division of responsibilities and, therefore, accountability, particularly in areas where responsibilities have not been clearly defined in the past, such as internally displaced persons. It has also sought to develop a more dynamic and prioritized approach to resource mobilization, producing consolidated appeals processes that identify clear strategies and objectives for humanitarian programmes, while addressing, as appropriate, rehabilitation and recovery needs. It has also addressed issues of monitoring and evaluation, relief and development linkages, and staff development and security.

23. In recent months, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee has taken further steps to implement Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/56, taking into account relevant elements of the reform programme of the Secretary-General and the subsequent establishment of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

A. Field coordination arrangements

24. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/182 and the report of the Secretary-General on reform, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, under the chairmanship of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, has a number of options available in deciding on the appropriate field coordination mechanism for each complex emergency. The understanding is that the Resident Coordinator should normally coordinate the humanitarian assistance activities of the United Nations system at the country level by assuming the dual function of Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, usually with staff support from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Alternatively, the Committee may designate a lead agency, particularly when the nature of the emergency is dominated by one overriding cause or response requirement. Under this option, the agency's country director assumes the responsibilities of the Humanitarian Coordinator and the agency itself provides additional support in-country for these responsibilities to be carried out. In some cases, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs may also provide staffing support to the lead agency. Finally, the Committee may recommend the appointment of a Humanitarian Coordinator distinct from the office of the Resident Coordinator and lead agency. In this case, administrative support should be provided, in general, by one of the operational agencies in the field. In addition, the Committee may recommend the appointment of a Regional Humanitarian Coordinator in emergency situations with a pronounced regional dimension. The above arrangements will be implemented with due regard to the need for greater coherence of United Nations activities in the field, where it is essential that the United Nations should act as one.

25. The need for effective coordination at the field level is paramount. Although there have been substantial improvements in recent years, there are still situations where competitiveness between agencies reduces efficiency. Further steps are foreseen by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, including improved training of country teams and sufficient delegation of authority to the field to ensure greater cohesiveness and integration of initiatives.

26. In view of the importance of the Resident Coordinator system, it has been agreed both in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and in the United Nations Development Group to improve the training and selection of Resident Coordinators who may be required to carry out humanitarian functions. It has also been agreed to clarify the parameters of authority for the Resident Coordinator/ Humanitarian Coordinator function; to establish criteria for the selection

of Humanitarian Coordinators; to establish a roster of candidates for Humanitarian Coordinators; to develop and establish a performance review mechanism; to agree on guidelines for a joint Emergency Relief Coordinator/UNDP Administrator performance appraisal of Resident Coordinators and Humanitarian Coordinators; and to recommend the scope and content of training for Humanitarian Coordinators.

B. Internally displaced persons

27. The need of over 20 million internally displaced persons around the world for both protection and assistance constitutes a major challenge to the international community. In many situations, these needs have not been effectively met and serious gaps in provision have been evident. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee has recognized the issue to be of central concern and is committed to developing a coherent and consistent response.

28. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee has designated the Emergency Relief Coordinator as the focal point for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons, with a focus on global advocacy for both protection and assistance requirements; resource mobilization; promoting global information on internally displaced persons; and support to field operations, including help with the negotiation of access to internally displaced persons. To carry out this function the Emergency Relief Coordinator has developed close links with both the representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The representative is considered the main advocate for the plight of internally displaced persons and is working to establish global standards, principles and a legal framework for their protection. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee has asked that the role of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights be further explored, to enhance her involvement in the protection of internally displaced persons and in advocating respect for their human rights. Resident Coordinators report regularly to the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the representative of the Secretary-General on country-specific situations related to internally displaced persons.

29. At the present time, the working group of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee serves as the main forum for consultations on matters concerning internally displaced persons. There will be a standing item on internally displaced persons on the agenda of all working group meetings. The Emergency Relief Coordinator also envisages the establishment of a network of focal points on internal displacement. This network will operate as an informal inter-agency consultative mechanism and promote a proactive, timely, coherent and coordinated response to protection and assistance needs. Since the beginning of 1998, consultations have been held to identify contact persons in relevant organizations for the establishment of the network. In this context, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is appointing a resource person to assist the Emergency Relief Coordinator in carrying out his functions with regard to internally displaced persons.

30. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee welcomed the guiding principles on internally displaced persons prepared under the direction of the representative of the Secretary-General and presented to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-fourth session. These principles provide a normative framework covering situations of internal displacement. Heads of agencies have agreed to share the guiding principles with their respective executive boards, as well as with all their staff, especially those in the field, and to apply them in their activities on behalf of internally displaced persons.

31. In addition, at the request of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons are working together on the development of guidelines for best practices concerning internally displaced persons. After approval by the Committee, the guidelines will be published as a practical field manual and will be made available to practitioners within and outside the United Nations system.

32. To improve the collection, analysis and dissemination of information related to internally displaced persons, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee agreed that the Emergency Relief Coordinator should promote the establishment of a database of global information on the subject. This task has been outsourced to the global internally displaced person survey, a project of the Norwegian Refugee Council. To ensure that the efforts of the United Nations system and the non-United Nations community in pursuit of reliable information are coordinated, non-governmental organizations have been encouraged to cooperate by making their data and analysis available.

C. Resource mobilization and the consolidated appeals process

33. During the review by the Economic and Social Council of the capacity of the United Nations system for humanitarian assistance the need to take a more comprehensive view of humanitarian programmes in an emergency was identified. The principal tool given to the Emergency Relief Coordinator (according to General Assembly resolution 46/182, annex) and to Humanitarian Coordinators in the field to support this approach is the consolidated appeals process. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee is determined to change the notion that the consolidated appeals process is merely synonymous with the actual appeal document and emphasize that it is a process, which reflects strategy development in the field, and continues right through to monitoring and review.

34. Since the autumn of 1997, members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee have mobilized considerable resources to improve the quality of the consolidated appeals process. The Committee's sub-working group on resource mobilization has been reconvened and is now devoted exclusively to improving the consolidated appeals process. This includes identifying focal points in each organization charged with sensitizing colleagues within their respective organizations (particularly those in the field who are directly involved in the process) to the new procedures and thinking, and to provide support to the appeal preparation process.

35. It is now recognized that the process of developing an appeal must involve all stakeholders, including the authorities of the host country, donor representatives and non-governmental organizations. Recent efforts to develop a strategic framework and common programming principles in relation to the programme in Afghanistan have provided a useful learning experience from which a participatory "assistance strategy" has evolved. Clearly, however, if donors are directly involved in this way in the preparation of consolidated appeals, there will be an expectation that they will also respond in a positive and timely way when the appeal is launched.

36. While the consolidated appeals process remains the principal resource mobilization tool for humanitarian assistance, it usually does not outline the overall vision and strategy of the international community in addressing the problems of countries in crisis. Improvements in the process complement the efforts initiated in the context of ACC to develop strategic frameworks aimed at ensuring more integrated peace-building approaches in selected countries. Strategic frameworks are tools and processes that outline the principles, policy objectives and institutional arrangements for a more integrated response embracing both political and assistance strategies. Ideally, they will allow all external partners to jointly identify, analyse and prioritize key issues and problems on the basis of shared principles and objectives. Common programming frameworks may also be a mechanism for United Nations agencies and programmes to ensure the commitment of their donors and partners, predictability of resource availability, as well as coherent principled policies.

37. In producing the consolidated appeals for 1998, strategies and objectives were more clearly stated than in the past. This is an essential first step towards more focused and integrated humanitarian programmes and is a way to ensure prioritization within the programmes. The strategies include explicit linkages between relief efforts and the Government's own priorities and initiatives. Greater emphasis has also been placed on linkages with development-oriented activities in support of peace-building, as well as on efforts to move more quickly out of the emergency phase.

38. The country team, under the leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator, manages the original process of priority setting and the reassessment of priorities if there are shortfalls in funding. The importance of prioritization has been repeatedly and correctly stressed by donor Governments. Nevertheless, some Governments continue to earmark their funds for specific activities, thereby taking upon themselves the responsibility for setting priorities. Now that the process of prioritization has been substantially improved, it is important that donors allow these priorities to be carried through, by providing adequate and, whenever possible, unearmarked resources. The response of donors to the introduction of programming for rehabilitation and recovery into the consolidated appeals process has to date also been generally disappointing. Efforts will be made by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to promote the appeals more aggressively than in the past.

39. It is to be noted that levels of funding for humanitarian assistance from official development assistance have declined in recent years after a sharp increase in the early 1990s. A comprehensive review of the funding of humanitarian programmes would now be appropriate, which could also explore the relationship between funding provided for emergencies and resources made available for development programming. Specifically, it is important for the United Nations system to understand the processes by which donor Governments decide their responses to consolidated appeals. The Secretary-General is ready to cooperate closely with Member States in carrying out such a review.

D. Monitoring, evaluation and accountability

40. Given the emphasis on an integrated approach and on the process of consolidated appeals, it is important to monitor and report on changes to programmes that result from changes in the humanitarian or funding situations. Appropriate reporting schedules and common indicators of progress will ensure that programme activities are monitored to provide the basis for programme analysis and revision. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee has agreed on the need for a simple field-based system for the strategic monitoring of the overall direction of humanitarian assistance in a particular setting. As part of the process of strengthening the consolidated appeals, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has begun to develop a guide to monitoring, which should provide an objective assessment on how programme targets and strategic objectives are being met, by matching field reports with financial information provided by donors and agencies. In so doing, it will be possible to assist the Humanitarian Coordinator to monitor the provision of resources against appeals and bring funding shortfalls to the attention of donors. As a first step, regular consolidated reports are being issued on the implications of underfunding, highlighting forced changes in priorities and cancellation of activities resulting from the lack of funding. This system, which will focus on the broad humanitarian picture, is, of course, distinct from the operational monitoring undertaken by individual agencies and programmes and is intended to complement it.

41. Improved strategic programming and monitoring will be important elements in ensuring that the overall accountability of humanitarian action, both to the donors and to the recipients of assistance, is grounded in sound analysis and increasingly reliable data. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is an active participant in networks of donors, non-governmental organizations and United Nations organizations specifically committed to improving the accountability and the standards of humanitarian action. Moreover, the Office has continued to develop its capacity to undertake or manage "lessons learned" studies. Studies on coordination in Angola and on United Nations experience in supporting indigenous mine action programmes were issued. Another significant output during the reporting period was the completion of a major study, mandated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, on coordination in the Great Lakes Region. Its wide-ranging recommendations and follow-up actions are currently under review in the Committee. They were also considered at an international seminar on lessons learned in humanitarian coordination, held at Stockholm in April 1998.

E. Sanctions

42. Economic sanctions and trade embargoes, especially protracted sanctions regimes, may have a serious negative impact on vulnerable segments of the civilian population in targeted countries.

43. The General Assembly, in annex II to its resolution 51/242 of 15 September 1997, requested that information on the potential or actual humanitarian impact of sanctions be brought immediately to the attention of the Security Council. The Assembly decided that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs should play a coordinating role in organizing and conducting assessments of humanitarian needs and vulnerabilities at the time of the imposition of sanctions, and regularly thereafter while sanctions are being implemented. It further decided that guidelines for the exemption of humanitarian goods be developed to ensure that applications are expeditiously dealt with. In particular, the Assembly requested that exemptions be granted on humanitarian goods, such as food and medicines, and other essential items. The Emergency Relief Coordinator has twice been invited to engage in discussions with the Council on this issue. In addition, regular discussions outside the Council are ongoing with Member States in order to promote the development of "smart" sanctions, which are intended to target a particular regime, without producing negative effects on the civilian population.

44. A statement issued by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on the humanitarian effects of sanctions was forwarded to the Security Council on 23 February 1998. In that statement, the Committee expressed concern with respect to the humanitarian impact of sanctions and emphasized that adverse humanitarian consequences on civilian populations should be avoided. Recently, embargoes on Sierra Leone, and the unique regional embargo on Burundi, in particular, have created difficulties for United Nations operations in humanitarian crisis situations. It follows from the above that when a sanctions regime is imposed, it is essential that humanitarian and human rights considerations be taken into account.

45. Field evaluations of the potential and actual humanitarian impact of sanctions have been undertaken upon the request of the Security Council, as in the case of the Sudan and most recently in Sierra Leone, where an inter-agency team assessed the humanitarian effect of the

imposition of United Nations sanctions and the ECOWAS embargo.

46. At the twenty-sixth Conference of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies held in 1995, a resolution was adopted that outlined the responsibilities of States when designing, imposing and reviewing economic sanctions, including assessing the effects on third States that might be adversely affected. States were encouraged to provide relief for the most vulnerable groups and the victims of complex emergencies in their territories, and to permit relief operations of a strictly humanitarian character for the benefit of the most vulnerable groups within the civilian population.

47. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is involved in developing methodologies to address the humanitarian impact of sanctions and to facilitate the processing of humanitarian exemptions. At the request of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, and with support from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNDP, UNICEF and WFP, a study commissioned by the Office, entitled "Towards more human and effective sanctions management", elaborated a substantial methodology. The Committee has set up a technical group of experts to further develop the methodology and to be able to conduct technical assessment missions at short notice.

48. It is also important to note that the long-term effects that sanctions regimes have on development, such as stunted growth of children or falling school attendance, represent a threat to the ability of the population to regain its previous health and social situation. These long-term consequences, and their effect on recovery and development, are not necessarily alleviated by short-term humanitarian interventions. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee's technical group of experts will seek to elaborate objective indicators to assess and monitor these consequences.

F. Staff security

49. Concerns about the security of humanitarian workers have been highlighted by tragic incidents in several countries. Since 1992, 139 United Nations civilian staff have been killed and 143 taken hostage while serving in operations worldwide. Between 1996 and 1997, the Red Cross movement lost 23 staff in the Great Lakes Region of Africa alone. This year a WFP staff member was killed in Angola and a staff member belonging to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was abducted in North Ossetia and remains missing. These are but a few examples of the dangers faced by humanitarian staff in the course of their everyday work. In some areas humanitarian workers of the United Nations and other international agencies have been targeted by the de facto authorities in incidents of violence, including kidnapping, armed robbery and looting. In this environment the United Nations is obliged to prepare for possible incidents almost anywhere. This is particularly difficult to do effectively when a shortage of funds has limited the recruitment of security professionals to less than 100 persons, to support the deployment of over 30,000 United Nations field staff. As requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/167 of 16 December 1997, the Secretary-General is submitting a separate special report to the Assembly at its fifty-third session on the security of United Nations and other humanitarian staff in the field, to which members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee have contributed extensively, and which is being prepared by the United Nations Security Coordinator. In addition, the Security Council has requested a report, which is in preparation, on the protection of humanitarian assistance to refugees and others in conflict situations.

V. Response to natural disasters and environmental emergencies

50. Between the beginning of 1997 and March 1998, the United Nations provided assistance to 51 Member States in their efforts to cope with the impact of 77 natural disasters and environmental emergencies. Over 200 situation reports were issued to alert and mobilize the international donor community and facilitate coordination of the response. In 39 cases, disaster-affected countries requested the Department of Humanitarian Affairs or the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to launch appeals for international assistance on their behalf. In response to these appeals, the international community reported over US$ 286 million worth of contributions in cash, kind and services for emergency relief assistance. In this context, the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) teams, which are led by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and include representatives from donor countries as well as from relevant United Nations and non-United Nations humanitarian agencies, are increasingly deployed to provide a rapid needs assessment and to assist the relevant authorities and the United Nations Resident Coordinator with the coordination of the international response to natural disasters. Over 40 such teams have been deployed since 1994. In cooperation with Member States and operational United Nations agencies, the UNDAC concept

will be further developed to enhance its value, through broadening the participation of relevant United Nations agencies, particularly UNDP and WFP. During 1997, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs warehouse, based in Pisa, Italy, organized 41 air and road shipments of relief goods to 21 countries affected by both natural disasters and complex emergencies. In 1997, UNDP supported in-country coordination of the United Nations response to 40 disasters in 36 countries through the allocation of $5.4 million.

51. Large-scale disasters are striking whole regions. Countries of the Horn of Africa were seriously affected by floods that started in November 1997. In Somalia alone, this emergency affected the lives of up to 1 million people and the death toll exceeded 2,000. Torrential rains poured down over central and eastern Europe in July 1997, resulting in unprecedented flooding over large areas of the Czech Republic, Germany, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, directly affecting 5 million people. In Poland losses amounted to at least 1 per cent of the national domestic product. In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, drought conditions led to a devastating famine.

52. The Latin American and Caribbean region has suffered the consequences of the unusually strong impact of the El Niño phenomenon. In Ecuador, floods, sea surges and mudslides have affected the coastal region since September 1997. The damage to the infrastructure has been estimated at $300 million and thousands of people have had to be evacuated. In Peru, similarly unusual weather conditions have, since the end of 1997, produced heavy rains resulting in flooding and landslides in the northern, central and southern parts of the country. A state of emergency was declared in over half the country. In March 1998, widespread forest fires devastated large areas of Roraima State in Brazil, again attributed to the adverse weather effects of the El Niño phenomenon.

53. The number and scale of environmental emergencies in different parts of the world are rising at an alarming rate. From September to November 1997, parts of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand were seriously affected by dense haze stemming primarily from large-scale forest fires in Indonesia, in turn caused by using fire for land clearing, and aggravated by the El Niño-induced drought conditions. It is estimated that the overall area burned in 1997 totalled about 2 million hectares.

54. Some countries are struck by recurrent disasters of great magnitude. The Islamic Republic of Iran suffered a series of earthquakes early in 1997, the third of which, in South Khorasan on 10 May, was the most damaging; over 1,500 people lost their lives and some 50,000 were left homeless. Several countries have also suffered severe environmental damage as a result of the prolonged stay on their territory of refugees from conflicts in neighbouring countries. Deforestation, pollution of water sources, loss of agricultural land and consequent population pressure in areas unable to sustain it create severe and long-lasting problems which have received insufficient attention from the international community.

55. The response to disasters is further complicated when they occur in a complex emergency situation. In February and May 1998, remote areas of Takhar and Badakshan provinces of Afghanistan were struck by strong earthquakes, killing over 5,000 people. On the first occasion, international relief efforts were seriously impaired by extreme weather conditions and the remoteness of the affected areas. Within days an appeal for an air operation had been launched and an UNDAC team was deployed to support the Office of the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for Afghanistan. This disaster illustrated the need for emergency rules and procedures to be developed to enable the United Nations to disburse emergency funds more quickly, to procure emergency supplies and equipment and to recruit emergency staff. Standby mechanisms of cooperation between peacekeeping and humanitarian actors are also valuable so that humanitarian organizations can benefit promptly from the tools at the disposal of peacekeeping missions.

56. Efforts have been made to increase the immediate availability of funds for natural disaster response by encouraging donors to contribute to a reserve established under the United Nations Trust Fund for Disaster Relief Assistance. So far, two Governments have made annual contributions to this reserve. In case of disaster, an amount agreed with the donor is allocated as a voluntary contribution for a specific relief operation and the funds are disbursed without delay. In view of the positive experience with this arrangement, it is hoped that additional donors will wish to contribute.

57. In order to adapt to the varying nature and increasing complexity of disasters, new ways of delivering an international response are being developed. An International Emergency Response Consultative Mechanism has been formulated to promote the effective use and coordination of international assets. The Mechanism has its roots in two existing international emergency management networks: the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) and the Military and Civil Defence Assets (MCDA) network. A database exists containing information on a large number of military and civil defence assets, which might be made available in future emergencies. However,

there is a need to determine which assets are most likely to be needed and to obtain a stronger sense of commitment from donor countries to ensure that those assets are actually available when required.

58. United Nations agencies have collaborated with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Resident Coordinators in natural disaster prevention, mitigation and response. For example, WFP has led the response to the floods and droughts in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It has allocated resources for prevention, mitigation and response in over 25 countries, including extensive contingency planning in South Africa to deal with the effects of El Niño. WFP and UNICEF responded to the floods in Somalia by using standby arrangements and rapid response mechanisms to deploy boats and organize air drops of food and medicine that greatly contributed to saving lives. FAO has focused on monitoring the impact on agriculture, forestry and fisheries of serious weather anomalies around the world believed to be linked to the El Niño phenomenon. It has also undertaken a number of measures to ensure that the international community is kept continually informed of the possible impact of El Niño on global, national and household food security. UNDP established national capacity-building programmes for disaster management in 11 countries. Similarly, three programmes to mitigate the worst effects of El Niño were launched in Latin America.

59. The lingering effects of the Chernobyl disaster call for an intensification of resource mobilization efforts. In addition, the number and magnitude of emergencies and natural disasters that periodically strike the world are today stretching to the limit the organizational resources of those providing humanitarian assistance. The optimum utilization of telecommunications technology in disaster prevention, preparedness and response is crucial. However, the transborder use of telecommunications equipment is frequently impeded by regulatory barriers; hence, the importance of the Convention on the Provision of Telecommunications Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations, to be adopted at the Intergovernmental Conference on Emergency Telecommunications in 1998. Agreements between the United Nations and individual member countries are being negotiated on the application of simplified customs formalities for the movement of relief teams and supplies. In response to General Assembly resolution 52/169 M of 16 December 1997, urging the international community to provide assistance to the population affected by nuclear fallout in the Semipalatinsk region of Kazakhstan, UNDP, together with a support group including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Department of Political Affairs, has organized an inter-agency mission to take place in June 1998. Its findings will be reported to the Secretary-General.

60. The frequency of requests for urgent international environmental assistance is growing rapidly. The lack of appropriate legal mechanisms represents a substantial problem in this area. Developing countries are often reluctant to notify the international community and request assistance in case of environmental emergencies. As a result, international assistance in this field is provided at present on a case-by-case basis and, in many instances, with significant delays. A proposal on a convention on early notification and assistance in the case of environmental emergencies could be pursued jointly by UNEP and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs with potentially interested countries.

61. Invariably, the lesson most frequently learned after natural disasters and environmental emergencies is that the United Nations should strengthen its efforts to promote disaster preparedness at the country and regional levels. This requires close interaction between the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNEP, UNDP and other entities of the United Nations system. This will involve information exchange, consultations on pre-disaster response preparedness, field presence and post-emergency follow-up and institutional handover, as well as joint and cooperative planning and evaluations. The strategic objective is to pool ideas and resources and to maximize the impact of the entire United Nations system in all aspects of disaster response, in the overall context of international efforts towards disaster reduction. These initiatives need to be closely coordinated with interested Governments and regional organizations. Particular attention will be given to developing arrangements to utilize capacities that exist in developing countries, and that may be available closer to the location of the disaster and are less costly than supplies from developed countries. Work to develop the capacity of non-governmental organizations in disaster-prone countries and to promote improvements in the quality of equipment manufactured in developing countries will also be prioritized.

VI. Relief and development

62. Countries undergoing protracted emergencies or recovering from long periods of conflict pose a particular

challenge to the international community. Often the Governments are extremely weak, control only a part of the territory or are based on the dominance of one ethnic or religious group. Traditional approaches to development programming are clearly inadequate. The emergence from conflict may be accompanied by large-scale population movements and by continuing threats to human rights, arising from a desire to settle scores after the war. In such situations there is a particular need for a coordinated approach by the international community and for a common understanding among aid donors of the principles that will govern aid programmes.

63. The relief/development debate arises from the idea that the victims of conflict require relief, while countries recovering after conflict require development assistance. At its simplest level the dilemma is that to continue the delivery of relief assistance once the conflict is over may distort economic relations, create dependencies on external relief assistance and impede the recovery process. But to suspend relief operations abruptly may leave many people without a means of subsistence, and could even reignite the conflict if people are forced into desperate situations.

64. As the international community has gained experience in more and more countries going through protracted emergencies, understanding of the complexity of the issue has improved. The links between humanitarian assistance, development programmes, promotion of human rights and issues of governance are being explored. Nevertheless, in a number of countries in recent years a dangerous gap has emerged between the "relief phase" and the "development phase" of assistance programmes. Ways of dealing with this problem have been widely discussed among the organizations confronted with the problem in the field, as well as at conferences and in academic papers. The following paragraphs review the present status of the debate, identify points on which progress has been made and highlight issues that still require discussion, agreement and specific action.

65. The concept of the continuum linking relief and development programmes is now recognized as inadequate. Even if not intended, the term "continuum" gives the impression of a linear progression between a situation in which relief is appropriate and one in which development is required. Recent experience has demonstrated that the phases of relief, rehabilitation and development are generally not consecutive, but overlap and often take place simultaneously, depending on the geographical area and the needs of specific target groups in a particular country. It has also come to be understood that relief and development cannot be seen in isolation from the political and human rights contexts. Development assistance providers have recognized that, when possible, efforts should be made to continue development activities during periods of extended crisis, since they can play an important preventive role. Assistance to countries emerging from conflict must be seen as part of an overall peace-building effort. At its session in April 1997, ACC agreed that peace-building, as a broad-based approach to crisis prevention and resolution, should comprise integrated and coordinated actions aimed at addressing any combination of political, military, humanitarian, human rights, environmental, economic, social, cultural and demographic factors.

66. In this context, coordinating mechanisms take on particular importance. There have been cases where coordination of the humanitarian and development agendas has not been well integrated. Humanitarian agencies have sometimes assumed that development agencies were ready to "pick up the reins" when relief programmes were phased out, and this was not the case. Similarly, development agencies may expect that humanitarian programmes will continue to receive donor funding even after the immediate crisis is over. Bilateral donors and the Bretton Woods institutions have sometimes not been associated with coordination mechanisms established by United Nations bodies.

67. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee and its members have tried to identify ways of overcoming these problems, both in general and in specific situations. In most countries the posts of Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator have been assumed by the same individual, thereby facilitating coordination. In addition, recent appeals launched under the consolidated appeals process have included components of short-term rehabilitation, as part of the "bridging process"; development agencies are increasingly aware that they need to start planning and initiating post-conflict interventions much earlier in the process; and all international actors are aware that relief programmes must be designed in ways that support civil society and that do not disrupt or destroy existing "coping mechanisms" within affected communities. In short, the United Nations and its partners need a strategy and sense of direction from the outset. This needs to be elaborated in the first consolidated appeal. The consolidated appeals process must be a programming instrument that goes beyond relief and that is sufficiently flexible to be adapted over time. There is growing interest in the possibility that strategic frameworks may be developed, in which political, human rights, humanitarian and development actors work out an integrated planning approach covering all sectors of

activity. A number of these issues are reviewed in more detail in the following paragraphs.

68. As noted earlier in the report, there have been suggestions recently that humanitarian action in some circumstances does harm as well as good. The need for relief aid, like that for development, must be carefully assessed and then the aid distributed in a manner that avoids misappropriation, market distortions, disincentives for production and a culture of dependency. The challenge is to distinguish between those households that can cope with little or no assistance, without missing out those most in need. However, targeting efforts are affected by problems of access, insecurity and unreliable information, as well as logistic and cost constraints. A coordinated needs assessment allows concerned agencies to better determine which population groups need assistance, what type, for how long and how much. There is also a growing understanding among United Nations and other agencies that the principles of development programming need to be taken into account when planning relief programmes. Donors must recognize that while media coverage of large-scale disasters dictates that food, clothing and medical care must be made available quickly and directly to the victims, in some cases the most effective forms of assistance may be of a more long-term nature.

69. Particular difficulties may arise in situations where large numbers of people are trying to return to their original homes. Their homes may already be occupied by desperate displaced people who have nowhere else to go or by other groups of returnees. Refugees returning from outside the country may bring with them resources, and entitlements to additional assistance, which far exceed what is available to the people who have lived through the war. Planning assistance programmes in these circumstances can be extremely difficult, particularly when the imperatives of the countries hosting the refugees (which would like them to return home quickly), conflict with the development priorities of the Government in power. In such a conflict of priorities, humanitarian agencies may find themselves supporting one side, while development agencies support the other. Unless an institutional structure is established in which such conflicts can be worked out, there is a real danger that refugees may be encouraged, or even forced, to return home to a situation that is absolutely unprepared to receive them. When situations of this kind arise in a specific country, it may be helpful to organize a high-level meeting bringing together all the major stakeholders, including the host Government, donors, humanitarian and development agencies and the international financial institutions, to adopt a common strategy to prevent the country from falling into the relief/development gap. This approach has already shown positive results in Cambodia and Mozambique, and is now being tried in Rwanda, where UNDP, together with United Nations humanitarian and specialized agencies and the Government, develop commonly agreed strategies and seek to ensure that assistance for rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees are fully coordinated.

70. Prolonged targeting by the international community of vulnerable groups such as returnees and internally displaced persons, if not properly planned, can also deepen social and ethnic divisions. This is of particular importance with regard to the reintegration of former combatants into civil society. Relief and development providers need to synchronize activities so that in the aftermath of crisis, programming begins to address the needs of wider communities. Attention to the specific needs of women is also of key importance. The role of women as conciliators and agents of recovery can be of particular value. Women have had to develop special skills needed to rebuild societies, to restore shattered economies and to create new social and educational networks. The process of self-empowerment that women have undergone in crisis situations should be recognized as an often pivotal positive change that can sustain reconciliation and promote recovery.

71. The problem of the relief/development gap can be exacerbated by the sharp distinction in most donor countries between emergency budgets and development budgets. These are usually handled by different departments, involve different assessment and approval processes, and have different political objectives and radically different time-frames for disbursement. While such distinctions were of little significance when emergencies were short-term localized phenomena, they become much more significant in countries suffering from long drawn-out institutionalized emergencies. This is particularly the case when the political conditions in the affected country are such that the donor providing emergency relief may be unwilling to consider providing development aid. Recognizing this problem, a number of Governments and donor organizations have sought to introduce new budget lines that allow them to support short-term rehabilitation activities with funds allocated from emergency budgets. This is an important development that deserves to be widely adopted. However, it is not in itself an adequate substitute for the ability to deploy development funds rapidly in countries emerging from conflict, and there is a danger that such transitional funds may come to constitute a third funding mechanism, difficult to coordinate with the emergency and development programmes.

72. In recent years, all United Nations agencies have carried out or sponsored serious reviews of policy and practice in the relief/development field. These have produced important insights and led to the adoption of new policies in the executive boards of several United Nations agencies. In April 1997, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and UNDP jointly sponsored a workshop in Turin, Italy, in which significant conclusions were reached, particularly regarding the relationships between various aid actors and the processes involved in planning assistance in post-conflict situations. These studies have recognized that the development agencies must develop a capacity and culture that enable them to work in "failed" and "weak" States, and not only in "normal" peacetime situations. They have recognized that in countries wracked by social tensions, the process of reconciliation and capacity-building of civil society must be an integral part of recovery programmes. They have built on the experience of work with local communities to show that well-designed relief programmes can incorporate rehabilitation objectives from the outset. And they have made it clear that reconstruction does not simply mean rebuilding the society as it was before the conflict, but also addressing the socio-economic causes of the conflict. Recovery can and should include new ideas about sustainable governance, respect for human rights and economic management.

73. There have also been initiatives to ensure that improved respect for human rights is among the objectives of assistance programmes, particularly in post-conflict societies. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is participating, along with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNDP, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs, in the Task Force on the Integration of Human Rights into Conflict Prevention, Peacemaking, Peacekeeping and Peace-building, which is considering the importance of institutional protections for human rights to a development plan that will ensure the long-term efficacy of humanitarian relief efforts. This approach is consistent with the emphasis in the reform programme (A/51/950) on mainstreaming human rights in the activities of the Organization. This issue was also addressed at a meeting organized by the World Bank in Paris in April 1998 on post-conflict reconstruction, which brought together humanitarian, development and human rights institutions, as well as major bilateral and multilateral donors, to discuss more effective strategies to deal with both the aftermath of conflict and the root causes of humanitarian crises.

74. The role of the international financial institutions is also particularly significant. The endorsement by the Board of Directors of the World Bank in May 1997 of A Framework for World Bank Involvement in Post-Conflict Reconstruction is a helpful development. The Framework recognizes the need for the Bank to avoid interventions that may make conflict more likely and outlines a five-stage process for Bank offices working in countries affected by conflict. Of particular significance are the second and third stages of the process that require the Bank to develop a transitional support strategy when it seems likely that the conflict may come to an end, and then to initiate early reconstruction activities as soon as the conflict is over. The recognition by the Bank of the importance of an early dialogue with humanitarian agencies and the need to participate in effective coordination mechanisms is welcome. This coordination is of particular importance in countries emerging from conflict and that have embarked on simultaneous processes of economic reform and peace-building. In the post-conflict environment, it is important that structural adjustment programmes should also be "peace-friendly", and not put at risk the process of rebuilding the social infrastructure.

75. A theme underlying much of this debate is that of the capacity of post-conflict societies to manage their own affairs. Considerable emphasis is placed on capacity-building. In the aftermath of crisis, recovery does not necessarily mean a return to the status quo ante. The international community needs to assess social changes that might have taken place as a result of the conflict. An environment should be created in which national authorities and new actors are involved in the planning, programming and prioritization of economic recovery activities early on. Broad-based consultative processes can empower a nation emerging from crisis by allowing it to control its own destiny, thus encouraging national ownership and social recovery. Therefore, issues of capacity-building and governance raise fundamental questions of economic and public sector restructuring. Of critical importance is the reversal of the outflow of indigenous expertise and capital provoked by the crisis, through the establishment of special programmes.

76. It is now recognized that there are important issues at stake in the immediate post-conflict situation, which are not traditionally part of either relief or development, but which must be addressed in any comprehensive recovery programme. These include disarmament, demobilization, reconciliation, mine clearance and awareness, policing, democratization, and human rights issues, such as judicial accountability. Practical programmes for refugee return, investment in infrastructure and rebuilding of social services can all be put at risk if demobilization of irregular fighters

is badly handled, or if the police force is incapable of ensuring a degree of law and order. If these issues are to be effectively addressed in a comprehensive recovery programme, political peace-building and human rights initiatives need to be integrated with the economic and social activities of the aid community. Too often these initiatives are developed separately in ways that fail to be mutually supportive.

77. As noted earlier in the report, action to reduce the threat of mines and unexploded ordnance is one area of work in which encouraging progress has been recorded in the past year. However, the humanitarian implications of landmines remain a significant concern. The United Nations will continue to advocate for a total ban on the use, transfer and stockpiling of landmines and for programmes that address the needs of affected communities and benefit mine survivors. The Mine Action Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has strengthened its capacity to meet its responsibilities as the United Nations focal point on landmines. At the country level, Resident Coordinators and Humanitarian Coordinators should, in consultation with the Mine Action Service, take steps to ensure effective determination of mine action priorities, including assistance to victims, by regularly bringing together representatives of the local government, donor Governments, United Nations and international agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the community of landmine survivors.

78. The conclusion is that all aid interventions, whether humanitarian, developmental, political or financial, are inextricably linked in their consequences for the recipient country. In order that their interaction should not result in unintended negative consequences, they need to be planned together, and as early as possible, where possible even before the conflict is over. Strategic frameworks need to be developed. These should reflect a common analysis of the political context and a common assessment of needs. They should identify and prioritize key components of a sustainable and integrated approach. They should also reflect a consensus on the guiding principles for programme implementation, and they must engage all the major stakeholders, including, in particular, the host Government and local communities, as well as donors. As concluded in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa:

> "In some situations of conflict or post-conflict peace-building, a 'strategic framework' approach may also be appropriate, providing the basis for a coherent effort by the entire United Nations system in countries in crisis. The strategic framework would especially embrace political, human rights, humanitarian and development activities aimed at promoting a durable peace and sustainable development. Such an effort would encompass all partners in the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, as well as national authorities, donor organizations and non-governmental organizations" (A/52/871-S/1998/318, para. 70).

VII. Observations

79. The blatant disregard for the basic principles of international humanitarian law that has been witnessed in conflicts in recent years is an issue of the greatest concern to all involved in international humanitarian action. It has fundamentally transformed the nature of humanitarian programmes in several countries. It is an issue that must be addressed on several fronts simultaneously. First, new efforts are required to strengthen the knowledge of humanitarian principles among combatants in all kinds of conflicts. Secondly, a concerted programme of action must be developed to ensure that these principles are in fact applied by combatants and that civilians in areas affected by armed conflict are, to the extent possible, protected. Thirdly, and closely related, the perpetrators of violence against civilian populations and aid workers must be brought to justice. In this context, particular emphasis is placed on the need to support the international tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia and to ensure that the Charter of the new International Criminal Court allows it to address the type of breaches of humanitarian law outlined in the present report. Fourthly, the capacity of United Nations agencies and other humanitarian organizations to provide security for their staff must be strengthened. And fifthly, full support must be extended to recent initiatives to halt the proliferation of small arms and landmines in areas where they may be used indiscriminately against the civilian population. The progress in the Ottawa process with regard to the Treaty on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction is particularly welcomed, and Member States are encouraged to ratify and implement the Treaty. The initiative to introduce a moratorium on the import, sale and production of small arms by the ECOWAS group in West Africa is also warmly welcomed.

80. The present report catalogues substantial progress in reinforcing and improving mechanisms for the coordination of humanitarian assistance programmes, both at Headquarters and in the field. For instance, arrangements

have been agreed for cooperative activities in support of internally displaced persons and in the area of monitoring and evaluation. It has also been agreed that a roster of candidates should be developed, as well as a cadre of coordination support staff from members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to ensure consistency in field coordination mechanisms. This will entail developing an inter-agency joint training programme for such staff and then maintaining the necessary rosters. The Secretary-General would like to express his sincere appreciation to the heads of the United Nations agencies and programmes, as well as other Committee participants, for their support for these initiatives. Full implementation of these agreed measures will require the allocation of resources, in a spirit of burden-sharing, to common programmes. Requirements in the fields of security, communications and staff training are examples. In this regard, it is to be hoped that, where necessary, these requirements will be brought promptly to the attention of the governing boards of agencies for their endorsement.

81. The Secretary-General is greatly encouraged by the growing recognition that in countries emerging from protracted crises a comprehensive peace-building strategy needs to be put together, which engages the national authorities, civil society and all external stakeholders. This is a complex exercise that will require concerted and continuous attention. More work can usefully be undertaken on developing conceptual models as well as practical strategies in specific situations. Work on this issue within the United Nations system is a major focus of attention for the Deputy Secretary-General.

82. Recent events have demonstrated the vulnerability of the planet to natural, environmental and technological disasters. There is much more that can be done to ensure that, where possible, such disasters are prevented, and that, where this is not possible, a rapid coordinated and effective response is mounted. As the last year of the International Decade of Natural Disaster Reduction approaches, particular attention should be paid to this question, with special emphasis on the need to develop the capacity of Governments and non-governmental organizations in disaster-prone countries.

83. A much wider segment of civil society must be involved in the efforts to change perceptions and raise awareness of humanitarian issues. Non-governmental organizations can play a particularly significant part in these efforts. It is the intention of the Secretary-General to ask his representatives in every part of the world to develop new links to civil society in their countries in a bid to strengthen the advocacy of humanitarian principles and to raise public awareness of the importance of supporting humanitarian programmes.

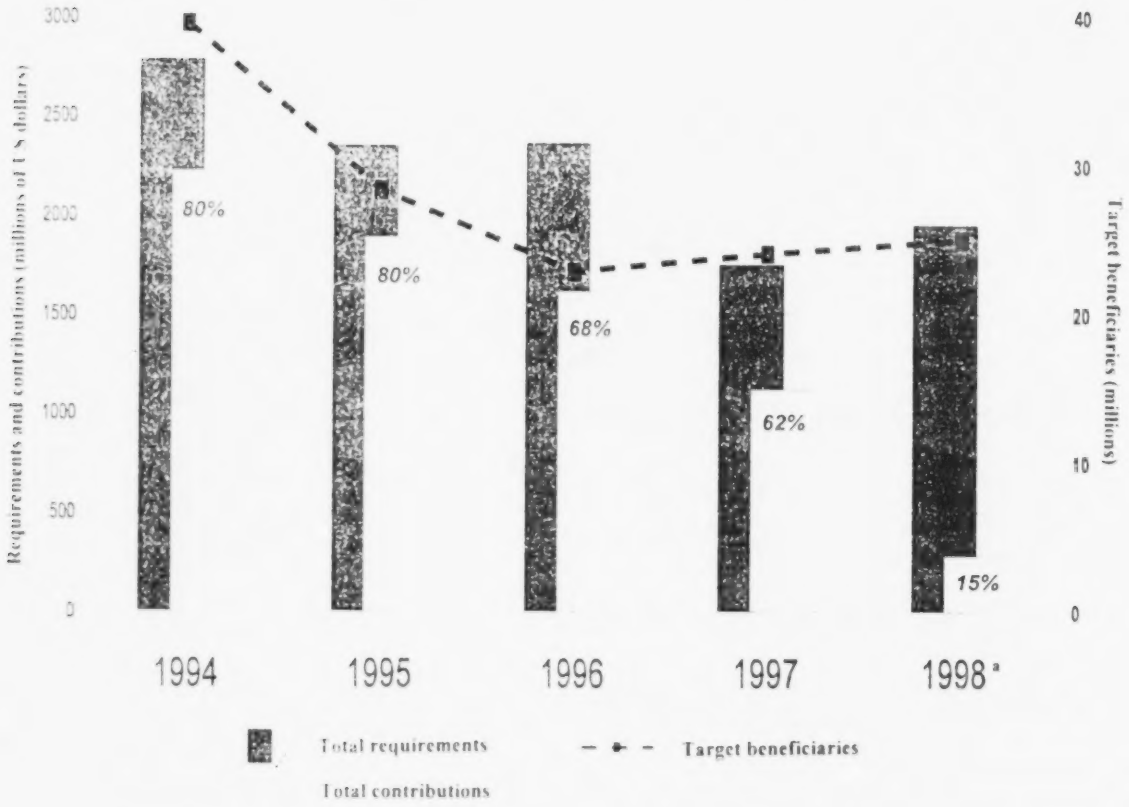
84. The Secretary-General is deeply concerned by what has become an extremely serious gap between the humanitarian needs identified by United Nations agencies and programmes and the funding provided by donors. In recent years, United Nations agencies have made major strides in meeting the requirements of donors for reporting and consultation. In spite of this, the resources made available have declined dramatically both in absolute terms and as a proportion of programme requirements. A review has therefore been proposed, fully coordinated with donor Governments, of the funding of humanitarian programmes. This review would also explore the relationship between funding provided for emergencies and resources made available for development programming. Particular emphasis needs to be placed on identifying ways of obtaining adequate voluntary funding quickly in situations where donor Governments have been fully involved in the elaboration of a programme. Rapid response in the early stages of a crisis can make a remarkable difference and can lessen the overall funding burden.

85. Finally, the Secretary-General would like to pay a most sincere tribute to the courage and dedication of aid workers throughout the world who daily put their lives at risk, in order to bring vital assistance to those in need.

Annex

United Nations consolidated inter-agency humanitarian assistance appeals

Summary of requirements and contributions (showing percentage of needs covered)



[a] Figures as at 15 May 1998; additional appeals may be launched before the end of 1998.

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Coordination, programme and other questions: proclamation of an international year of mountains

Report of the Secretary-General

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Introduction

1. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1997/45 of 22 July 1997 entitled "Proclamation of an international year of mountains", mindful that mountains represented an essential component of the global life-support system and recognizing that they were essential to the survival of the global ecosystem, welcomed and supported the ongoing efforts to protect fragile mountain ecosystems and to promote sustainable mountain development. In the same resolution, the Council requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with Governments and relevant international, regional and non-governmental organizations, to submit to the Council at its substantive session of 1998, a report on the desirability of proclaiming an international year of mountains and on other ways and means of ensuring the sustainable development of mountain countries.

2. In accordance with the above-mentioned request, the Chairman of the Commission on Sustainable Development, which considers sustainable mountain development in the context of its periodic reviews of the implementation of chapter 13 (Managing fragile ecosystems: sustainable mountain development) of Agenda 21,[1] sought the views of member States and observer States on this matter. Similar invitations for comments were conveyed to the organizations of the United Nations system participating in the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), as well as to international, regional and non-governmental organizations with an interest in sustainable mountain development. The replies received from all these sources have provided valuable assistance in the preparation of the present report. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), which serves as IACSD task manager for chapter 13 of Agenda 21, provided a significant contribution to this report.

I. Desirability of proclaiming an international year of mountains

3. The inclusion of a separate chapter on mountains in Agenda 21, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, indicates the crucial importance of these fragile ecosystems to the international community. As noted in Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/45, at least one fifth of the Earth's land surface is covered by mountains, and about 10 per cent of the world's population live in mountainous regions, including highlands. A far greater proportion of the world's population depends on mountain resources such as water, agriculture, forestry, mining and biological diversity. It is estimated that mountains provide the freshwater needs for more than half of humanity – are, in effect, the "water towers" of the world – a point brought out in the recent discussion of freshwater issues at the sixth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development held from 20 April to 1 May 1998.[2] Mountains also provide a significant portion of the Earth's timber, minerals and grazing land. As reported by FAO, mountains harbour by far the largest number of distinct ethnic groups, varied remnants of cultural traditions, environmental knowledge and habitat adaptations; they host some of the world's most complex agro-cultural gene pools and traditional management practices. The fact that mountains offer a rich variety of vast natural landscapes and cultures has made them very attractive in terms of tourism, one of the world's largest industries. These resources and services in mountain areas are of more than national or regional importance; they have a truly global significance for the future of humankind.[3]

A. Indications of support for a year, including suggestions for proposed activities

4. The replies received from Governments and international, regional and non-governmental organizations to the requests for views on the desirability of declaring an international year of mountains recognize the important and essential attributes of mountains described above and the critical need to protect and manage sustainably their fragile ecosystems. All 16 replies received from Governments support the proposal to proclaim an international year of mountains and several indicate that they are already planning or considering special activities to be held in connection with such a year. In Kyrgyzstan, a number of activities are planned or have already been undertaken as a follow-up to the 1996 Bishkek conference and in preparation for an international year, including a regional "Workshop on Central Asian Mountains", held in Bishkek in May 1998. The Government of Kyrgyzstan hopes that this workshop, which was held in collaboration with the Asia Pacific Mountain Network (APMN) and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), will be a model for additional regional meetings on other continents held to mark an international year of mountains. The sponsors expect that inputs from such meetings could contribute to a proposed international conference on mountains and development that would take place in Bishkek

during such an international year. In addition, the International University of Kyrgyzstan and ICIMOD have agreed, in a memorandum of understanding signed in January 1998, on a number of other preparatory activities, including the establishment of an international organizing committee for a year of mountains. Other specific ideas with respect to promoting an international year include a proposal by Andorra to organize an international seminar on the influence of a mountain environment on the philosophy of foreign relations, and the possible convening by Switzerland of a symposium linking science and community development.

5. Several other States (Germany, Italy, Pakistan, Turkey) indicated that they would be planning special events to celebrate an international year of mountains should a decision be taken to declare one. Some respondents (France, Switzerland) noted the importance of regional initiatives, for example, within the framework of the Alpine Convention.[4] Others (Japan, Lesotho) have stated that activities would be planned in connection with national legislative proposals, including national action plans for Agenda 21. Mongolia conveyed the expectation that an international year of mountains would contribute to a better understanding of landlocked mountainous countries.

6. Among United Nations organizations, FAO has been designated task manager for mountain issues by IACSD and could be expected to continue its role as lead agency during an international mountain year. To facilitate the implementation of chapter 13 of Agenda 21, FAO has been planning to hold a global consultation on sustainable mountain development in 1999 or 2000, but the organization has indicated that the year could be changed to coincide with an international year of mountains, should one be declared after 1999 or 2000. FAO sees the objectives of an international year of mountains as encompassing increased awareness of, and knowledge about, mountain ecosystems, their dynamics and functioning; promotion and defence of the cultural heritage of mountain communities; and conservation and sustainable development of mountain resources for present and future human well-being.

7. The United Nations University (UNU) has also been active in promoting mountain research and development, particularly during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development process, and currently supports (with the International Mountain Society) a quarterly journal called "*Mountain Research and Development*". UNU anticipates that an international year of mountains could contribute to a better public awareness of the value and fragility of mountain environments and could correct some of the misunderstandings concerning mountains that continue to exist. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) also contributes to the study and protection of mountain areas through its Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme.

8. Non-governmental organizations involved in mountain issues are committed to pursuing the goals of chapter 13 of Agenda 21, as well as to addressing new concerns such as conservation, culture and sacred values. Building on the momentum from the Earth Summit, a world consultation of mountain non-governmental organizations held in Lima in February 1995 formally established the International Mountain Forum, a network of organizations, institutions and individuals with a shared interest in sustainable mountain development. With major financial support provided by the Government of Switzerland, the Mountain Forum operates primarily as a decentralized structure with regional and subregional focal points established to coordinate networking activities. Much of its work is carried out through electronic mail consultations and conferences, which have helped canvass the views of a large number of non-governmental organizations on the desirability of proclaiming an international year. The Forum's regional networks have indicated their vigorous support for a United Nations declaration of an international year of mountains and have pledged the full cooperation and efforts of their members in its celebration. One of these, APMN is, as noted above, already working with ICIMOD and the International University of Kyrgyzstan to prepare for an international conference on mountains and development to be held during an international year. APMN sees among the benefits to be gained from such a year the further development of information networks, especially in the newly independent Central Asian States, and the stimulation of scientific research on mountain problems. APMN also has plans to collaborate with other partners in a travelling photographic exhibition to be called "Mountains of the world". The Mountain Institute (TMI), which currently serves as global representative for the over 600 members of the Mountain Forum, anticipates that the proclamation of an international year would not only greatly enhance global awareness of fragile mountain ecosystems, but also call attention to the need for specific policies and activities that support integrated community-based approaches to addressing the special needs of mountain people, who are among the world's poorest. In addition, several national non-governmental organizations based in India and Azerbaijan have responded to the request for views with their firm support for the declaration of an international year of mountains.

B. Timing of an international year of mountains

9. The Economic and Social Council's consideration in 1997 of an international year of mountains was based on a proposal submitted by the observer for Kyrgyzstan which had called for the proclaiming of such a year in 2000.[5] This date would coincide with the eighth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, which will focus on integrated planning and management of land resources, including mountain resources. Pakistan and all the non-governmental organizations that replied to the request for views supported Kyrgyzstan's suggested timing. The majority of other responses – though small in number – saw it as essential that there be adequate time for preparing an international year and considered that 2000 might be too soon to allow sufficient lead time. It was also noted that in 1997 the General Assembly had already proclaimed two international years to be celebrated in 2000, the International Year for the Culture of Peace and the International Year of Thanksgiving, in addition to calling attention to other activities in connection with the millennium – and proclaimed the year 2001 as the International Year of Volunteers[6]. Austria, Germany and Switzerland suggested in their responses that an international year of mountains could be held in 2002, when the 10-year overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 would take place. Such an approach has recently been supported by the Government of Kyrgyzstan. FAO considers that choosing a year between 2001 and 2003 would help ensure more substantive activities and more concrete results.

10. It should perhaps be noted that the guidelines for future international years, contained in the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/67 of 25 July 1980 and adopted by the General Assembly in its decision 35/424 of 5 December 1980, contain procedures for organizing the celebration of international years that are relevant to the question of timing. Paragraph 16 of the guidelines states that in general, there should be a period of two years between the proclamation of an international year and the beginning of that year.

II. Ensuring the sustainable development of mountain countries

11. In considering ways and means through which Governments and international, regional, national and local organizations could help achieve a better understanding of mountain issues and greater cooperation in ensuring sustainable mountain development, the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1997/45 highlighted the following key elements:

(a) Awareness-raising activities (para. 1);

(b) Coordination of regional and international cooperation (para. 2);

(c) Exchange of information and experiences (para. 2);

(d) Support for subregional and interregional agreements on mountains regarding their protection and sustainable and equitable development (para. 3);

(e) Encouragement of regional, national and international networking activities (para. 4).

Each of these elements can make an important contribution to the furtherance of international cooperation and understanding, which constitute the declared purpose of celebrating international years. Each also encompasses, to varying extents, existing activities that offer opportunities for further success in efforts to ensure the sustainable development of mountain areas and their inhabitants.

12. Actions in support of these five areas can and do take place at all levels: at the international level through the Commission on Sustainable Development's monitoring of the implementation of chapter 13, through the FAO programmes dealing with sustainable mountain development and watershed management, and through the activities of other organizations such as UNESCO (MAB programme), the World Meterological Organization (WMO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UNU; at regional and subregional levels through those organizations and treaties devoted to specific mountain ranges of regions (for example, the Alpine Convention, APMN) and the network of agricultural research centres known as the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR); nationally through domestic legislative procedures and government initiatives, including the adoption of mountain-specific policies and laws and the establishment of national plans and commissions for sustainable development; and locally through grass-roots, largely non-governmental organizations, support for traditional, indigenous knowledge systems and the cultural heritage of mountain communities, as well as the improvement of the economic and social conditions of mountain peoples.

13. Possible ways and means to further the sustainable development of mountain areas are discussed below according to the type of activities identified by the Economic and Social Council last year. The analysis has been suggested by FAO, as task manager for chapter 13. FAO

supports the view that all these activities would likely be more widespread, more inclusive, and more effective with the added impetus that an international year of mountains could bring. The discussion may be set forth as follows:

(a) Awareness-raising: although there have been intensive efforts by organizations and groups dealing with mountains to inform people about, and involve them in, issues regarding mountains and their communities, further awareness-raising activities regarding mountain issues are required. While mountain specialists and interest groups are largely communicating through the Mountain Forum and other regional and local groups, the mountain communities need further support in the generation and dissemination of knowledge and experiences. In the view of FAO, a wealth of information and promotion activities have been launched since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at global, regional and national levels; however, awareness-raising activities at the national, subnational and local levels could be expanded to, *inter alia*:

(i) Inform the urban population (for example, schoolchildren) of the complex interrelationships existing between mountain and urban areas (in terms, for instance, of freshwater quantity and quality, sports and other recreational activities, specific products from mountain areas) and thereby improve (or re-establish) understanding and solidarity between upland and lowland communities;

(ii) Provide an impetus to create awareness and involve a greater number of stakeholders including national and local government structures, non-governmental organizations, communities and the private sector in the implementation of chapter 13;

(iii) Raise awareness on the need for reconciling conservation and development;

(iv) Provide an opportunity to raise awareness on biological diversity in mountain ecosystems;

(v) Raise awareness of geopolitical issues connected with mountains;

(b) Coordination of regional and international cooperation: a number of ongoing initiatives and cooperative frameworks have a particular relevance for mountain issues. Further efforts could help in promoting a common approach to and greater coordination of the implementation of international conventions and agreements (for example, on climate change, biological diversity, desertification, coastal areas and the MAB programme). An important development for future work was the October 1995 decision of the Council of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to include mountain ecosystems in one of four operational programmes within the biodiversity focal area. The importance of mountain ecosystems has also been emphasized by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Furthermore, since 1997, GEF resources have also been directed to mountain areas through a UNU project called "People, land management and environmental change (PLEC)";

(c) Exchange of information and experiences: since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the "Mountain Agenda" (as the issues addressed in chapter 13 are called) has generated considerable enthusiasm and cooperative efforts, largely because of the dedication of the non-governmental organization community. An international year of mountains might be expected to provide a stimulus for further exploration and coordination of initiatives towards sustainable mountain development. In combination with the awareness-raising activities mentioned above, further efforts are required to enhance the collection, exchange and dissemination of information related to mountain issues and "best practices", based on the results of the large number of projects and programmes relevant to mountains initiated by United Nations agencies, national Governments and bilateral development agencies, international research centres and universities, international and local non-governmental organizations and committed individuals. A greater knowledge and awareness of the circumstances facing, mountain inhabitants and the constraints and challenges they are confronting, especially the most vulnerable groups of women, children and the disadvantaged, are required; but information should also be spread about the wealth of cultural values of which the mountain communities are depositories and guardians;

(d) Support for subregional and interregional agreements on mountains: a number of regional initiatives on sustainable mountain development have been undertaken. Various initiatives by mountain countries in the Alps, Andes, Carpathians, Caucasus, Himalaya-Hindu Kush and Pyrenees regions also provide possible frameworks for further cooperation at the scale of mountain ranges and complexes. There are, however, many mountain ranges – particularly in other parts of Asia and Eastern Europe, and in Africa and Central America – where considerable opportunities exist for regional initiatives to be fostered by interested regional and national Governments, bilateral agencies, international organizations, and others. The various regional elements of the Mountain Forum may have a particular role to play in mobilizing key stakeholders. There is also a need for more

transborder collaboration among countries sharing services from the same mountain ranges or unique biological riches;

(e) Regional, national and international networking: as indicated earlier, non-governmental organizations at all levels – international, regional and local – have taken a central role in developing and implementing networking initiatives among the international mountain community. The creation and expansion of the Mountain Forum, especially the worldwide Internet services maintained by the Mountain Institute (<http://www.mtnforum.org>), have been successful, but these efforts require further and continued support. A better sharing of knowledge, technology and experience is necessary for the effective management of mountain ecosystems.

III. Conclusions

14. The adoption by the international community in 1992 of chapter 13 of Agenda 21 has generated a genuine enthusiasm for and interest in mountain ecosystems and their conservation and sustainable development. This interest is a shared one among mountain communities, non-governmental organizations, international organizations and governmental institutions, at national, regional and international levels. There is a continuing need for rigorous interdisciplinary scientific research on mountains that takes into account the knowledge and traditions of the mountain inhabitants themselves. This need was emphasized in an independent 1997 study, prepared for the General Assembly's nineteenth special session to review the implementation of Agenda 21, which concluded that the global database on mountains was "unacceptably sparse" and that whatever data existed were often unreliable. Given the reality of an increasing scarcity of research funds, the authors called for further international collaborative efforts, including standardization of objectives and methods, sharing of data banks and identification of minimum needs.[7]

15. A more recent report, to be published by FAO in the latter half of 1998, concludes that what is now needed is an agreed prioritization – at regional and global levels – of the objectives contained in chapter 13 and other components of the "Mountain Agenda". The report suggests that while freshwater, biological diversity and tourism might be global priorities, each of the intergovernmental and non-governmental organization consultations held since Rio has produced its own, different set of priorities for mountain issues. The elaboration of national action plans for mountain areas and the integration of mountain concerns in national policies and strategies for sustainable development could help focus the decision-making process in mountain countries.[8]

16. The argument has been put forth by the active participants of the mountain community – Governments, international organizations, research institutions, non-governmental organizations, individuals and scholars – that the proclamation of an international year of mountains would provide an impetus for the work still required to achieve the objective of chapter 13, namely, sustainable mountain development. Other ways and means have also been suggested. The largely untapped role of the private sector – especially major industries like tourism, energy, forestry and mining, which affect mountain regions around the world – also offers opportunities.[9] While there is now a greater recognition of the enormous value mountains confer on the global economy, society and environment, much still needs to be done at all levels to protect, conserve and sustainably manage these resources. The responses received from Governments, non-governmental organizations and organizations of the United Nations system suggest that the proclamation of an international year of mountains at an appropriate time could contribute to the efforts to achieve such objectives.

Notes

[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

[2] *See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1998, Supplement No. 9* (E/1998/29); also *Mountains of the World: Water Towers for the 21st Century*, a report prepared for the Commission on Sustainable Development by the Mountain Agenda, with support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Bern, 1998.

[3] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), *Review of Implementation of Chapter 13 of Agenda 21 from 1992 to 1997* (Rome, forthcoming), report prepared by Dr. Martin Price. See also Report of the Secretary-General on overall progress achieved since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development: managing fragile ecosystems: sustainable mountain development (E/CN.17/1997/2/Add.12), prepared by FAO for the fifth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

[4] International Convention for the Protection of the Alps (Alpine Convention), signed by five Alpine countries and the European Union in 1991, entered into force in 1995. Two additional countries signed it subsequently.

[5] See letter dated 30 January 1997 from the Permanent Representative of the Kyrgyz Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (E/1997/3); and also A/52/3.

[6] See General Assembly resolutions 52/15 entitled "Proclamation of the year 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace", 52/16 entitled "International Year of Thanksgiving, 2000", and 52/17 entitled "International Year of Volunteers, 2001", all adopted without a vote on 20 November 1997.

[7] See *Mountains of the World: A Global Priority*, B. Messerli and J. D. Ives, eds. (New York and London, Parthenon Publishing Group, 1997), pp. 12-13, and 455.

[8] See FAO, *Review of Implementation* ... The section entitled "Chapter 13 after UNGASS" is particularly relevant (pp. 52-65 of the unedited text).

[9] Some of these opportunities are discussed in *Investing in Mountains: Innovative Mechanisms and Promising Examples for Financing Conservation and Sustainable Development*, L. Presont, ed. (Franklin, West Virginia, Mountain Institute/FAO, 1997). The publication reports on an "electronic conference" organized by the Mountain Forum in 1996.

United Nations A/53/151 – E/1998/69

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General Assembly
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Item 31 of the preliminary list*

Culture of peace

Economic and Social Council
Substantive session of 1998
Item 7 (f) of the provisional agenda**

Coordination, programme and other questions: International Year for the Culture of Peace, 2000

Letter dated 16 June 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith an appeal for the children of the world addressed to the Heads of State of all States Members of the United Nations by Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, issued in May 1997.

I would like to request you to arrange to have the present letter and the text of the appeal, with signatures of the Laureates, circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 31 of the preliminary list, and of the Economic and Social Council, under item 7 (f) of the provisional agenda of the substantive session of 1998.

(*Signed*) Anwarul Karim **Chowdhury**
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
to the United Nations

* A/53/50.
** E/1998/100.

98-17350 (E) 250698

Annex

Appeal for the children of the world addressed to the Heads of State of all States Members of the United Nations by Nobel Peace Prize Laureates

Today, in every single country throughout the world, there are many children silently suffering the effects and consequences of violence.

This violence takes many different forms : between children on streets, at school, in family life and in the community. There is physical violence, psychological violence, socio-economic violence, environmental violence and political violence. Many children - too many children - live a "culture of violence".

We wish to contribute to reduce their suffering. We believe that each child can discover, by himself, that violence is not inevitable. We can offer hope, not only to the children of the world, but to all of humanity, by beginning to create, and build, a new "Culture of Non-Violence".

For this reason, we address this solemn appeal to all Heads of States, of all member countries of the General Assembly of the United Nations, for the U.N. General Assembly to declare:

• *That the first decade of the new millennium,* ***the years 2000-2010, be declared the "Decade for a Culture of Non-Violence".***

• *That at the start of the decade* ***the year 2000 be declared the "Year of Education for Non-Violence".***

• *That non-violence be taught at every level in our societies during this decade, to make the children of the world aware of the real, practical meaning and benefits of non-violence in their daily lives, in order to reduce the violence, and consequent suffering, perpetrated against them and humanity in general.*

Together, we can build a new culture of non-violence for humankind which will give hope to all humanity, and in particular, to the children of our world.

With deepest respect,

The Nobel Peace Prize Laureates

Signatories:

1980 ADOLFO PEREZ ESQUIVEL

1991 AUNG SAN SUU KYI

1977 BETTY WILLIAMS

1996 CARLOS FELIPE XIMENES BELO

1989 DALAI LAMA

1984 DESMOND MPILO TUTU

1986 ELIE WIESEL

1993 FREDERIK DE KLERK

1996 JOSE RAMOS HORTA
Nobel Peace Laureate '96

1995 JOSEPH ROTBLAT

1983 LECH WALESA

1977 MAIREAD CORRIGAN-MAGUIRE

1990 MIKHAIL GORBACHEV

1979 MOTHER TERESA

1993 NELSON MANDELA

1970 NORMAN BORLAUG

1987 OSCAR ARIAS SANCHEZ

1994 SHIMON PEREZ

1965 UNICEF

1994 YASSER ARAFAT

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Agenda item 7 (f)
Coordination, programme and other questions: International Year for the Culture of Peace, 2000

Letter dated 16 June 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Corrigendum

The above-mentioned document is hereby withdrawn.

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* A/53/50

98-19719 (E) 080798

United Nations E/1998/70

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New York, 6-31 July 1998
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Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation: reports of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme

Resource mobilization strategy for the United Nations Children's Fund

Note by the Secretariat

1. In its decision 1998/6, adopted at its first regular session of 1998 (see E/1998/35 (Part I)), the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) requested that a report be prepared for submission to the Board at its annual session of 1998 on the resource mobilization strategy for UNICEF. In the same decision, the Executive Board requested that the report and the comments of the Board thereon be transmitted to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1998.

2. Section I of the present note contains the report requested; section II contains the comments of the Executive Board on the report.

* E/1998/100

98-17885 (E) 300698

I. Report on the work of the UNICEF Executive Board and secretariat on a resource mobilization strategy for UNICEF (E/ICEF/1998/11)

INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is the second to be prepared in response to Executive Board decision 1998/6 (E/ICEF/1998/6 (Part I)), in which the Board decided to hold at least one inter-sessional meeting, open to all delegations, in the first quarter of 1998 to discuss a resource mobilization strategy for UNICEF. The first inter-sessional meeting, held on 5 March 1998, was based on a conference room paper (E/ICEF/1998/CRP.7) and allowed delegations and a representative of the Standing Group of National Committees for UNICEF to exchange views on elements of the resource mobilization strategy.

2. The next step called for by decision 1998/6 is the present report, produced for discussion at the annual session of the Executive Board and focusing on the work of the secretariat and the Board on the strategy. The report will be transmitted to the Economic and Social Council together with a summary of the discussion at the annual session. Following the session, the Executive Director will produce a draft resource mobilization strategy for discussion at the second regular session in September, with a view to adopting the strategy at the first regular session in 1999.

3. The context for developing the resource mobilization strategy is provided by General Assembly resolution 50/227 of 24 May 1996, in which the Assembly decided that the governing bodies of the funds and programmes should adopt, in the context of their programme arrangements and financial plans, a specific and realistic target for core resources, based on their programme needs and specific mandates. The Assembly stated that the governing bodies of the funds and programmes should take decisions on their own funding arrangements, and stressed the importance of keeping Member States informed of the financial picture of the funds and programmes, as well as the relationship between programme requirements and available funding.

4. Continuing this discussion, the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1997/59 of 24 July 1997, recommended that the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes review and monitor their funding arrangements, with a view to making funding more secure and predictable with respect to core resources, and with a view to meeting their funding targets, their programme objectives and the priorities and needs of programme countries. The Council called upon the Executive Boards to take decisions on their own funding arrangements in accordance with Assembly resolution 50/227, and to report thereon to the Council at its substantive session of 1998.

5. To respond to the requests of the Assembly and the Council, the UNICEF Executive Board began a process of consultation and discussion with the secretariat at its third regular session of 1997, when it decided to have the Executive Director present an oral report on the issue of resource mobilization to the first regular session of 1998. In that report (reproduced in E/ICEF/1998/CRP.7), the Executive Director described efforts undertaken by the secretariat to address the issue. These included the formation of a team to review UNICEF resource mobilization efforts, emphasis on the importance of general resources (core resources), increased emphasis on private sector fund-raising, a review of the Private Sector Division (PSD) (formerly the Greeting Card and related Operations), expanded collaboration with the international financial institutions and improved contributions management. The Executive Director asked a number of questions of the Board, including how UNICEF could assist Governments in securing funding for children, the possibility of securing multi-year funding for core resources and how countries could increase their resources for children.

6. These questions were also discussed in greater detail at the inter-sessional meeting of 5 March, which identified several areas for further consideration. These issues will contribute to the draft resource mobilization strategy to be submitted to the Board at the second regular session in September.

7. The issue of resource mobilization is also being discussed in other forums, including the Second Committee, the Economic and Social Council and the working group of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund Executive Board. The secretariat is following these discussions closely to benefit from their findings and conclusions and to avoid duplication of effort. The secretariat has also been pleased to respond to individual delegations which have wished to discuss the resource mobilization efforts of UNICEF.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONTINUED CONSIDERATION

8. It is important to state at the outset that a total of eight Governments increased their local currency contributions to UNICEF general resources in 1997, although the continued strength of the United States dollar adversely affected UNICEF income. The secretariat intends to include an analysis of the effect of exchange rate fluctuations and possible options to minimize their effect in the draft strategy to be submitted to the second regular session. Total UNICEF income in 1997 was also affected by a decline in supplementary funds contributions.

9. Since 1990, total government contributions (general resources and supplementary funds) to UNICEF have fluctuated between $500 million and $700 million, peaking in 1992 and

falling back almost to the 1990 level in 1996. In that same period, the level of contributions to general resources has not changed significantly. Over the last five years, the same top five government donors (Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United States) have contributed an average of 65 per cent of general resources provided by Governments. The top 10 donors today are responsible for more than 80 per cent of government general resource contributions (in addition to the Governments listed above, they are Denmark, Finland, Italy, Switzerland and the United Kingdom). Programme countries have consistently contributed around 10 per cent of government general resources. The proportion of general resources to supplementary funds over the last 10 years has ranged between 69 and 54 per cent, with significant fluctuations in both supplementary and emergency funds. Thus, the fluctuation in total income is primarily a direct result of the fluctuation in supplementary funding and emergency contributions. Private sector income, on the other hand, has shown a steady rise since 1990, from close to $200 million to about $300 million in 1996. The private sector now contributes almost one third of total general resources (1997 figures).

10. Whether or not UNICEF has reached a plateau in core resources from Governments will depend on the willingness of a number of Governments to assume a higher profile in providing financial support to the organization and on the willingness of those Governments that provide the lion's share of support to continue increasing their contributions. How to widen the pool of donors to include more Governments, including those of programme countries, and identifying what actions may lead to increased contributions from existing donors are key challenges to be addressed by an effective resource mobilization strategy. In terms of generating revenue from other sources, UNICEF has a distinct advantage within the United Nations system because of its historic relationship with the general public and the private sector, through the work of the National Committees for UNICEF and the Goodwill Ambassadors.

A. What the secretariat needs to do to create conditions for effective fund-raising

11. The first and most important condition for effective fund-raising is for UNICEF to continue to develop sustainable, quality programmes at country level that show demonstrable results for children and women. UNICEF must be able to show the impact of its programmes, including capacity-building and advocacy efforts. The development and implementation of guidelines and indicators for rights-based programming will be key to assessing the impact of UNICEF programmes.

12. The secretariat attempts to summarize the UNICEF contribution to the improvement of the situation of the world's children and the demonstrable results achieved in a number of reports and publications aimed at different audiences. These include the report of the Executive Director that is submitted to the Executive Board each year at its annual session; the two flagship publications, *The State of the World's Children* and *The Progress of Nations*; and other, more technically oriented publications. The communication strategy being presented to the Executive Board at the annual session (E/ICEF/1998/10) discusses the use by UNICEF of print media and other forms of communication to bring attention to the needs of children.

13. While maintaining its present focus on country programmes and improved efficiency through the Management Excellence Programme, UNICEF is looking ahead, through both the end-decade review of the progress made since the World Summit for Children and the organization's focus beyond the year 2000, which will be strongly guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Despite significant progress to date, current available data suggest that achieving some of the decade's goals globally and in many regions will not be easy. Issues affecting the situation of children, and thus the achievement of the goals, include the continuing rise in poverty and inequality, declining official development assistance and reduced public expenditure on basic social services, the continued spread of HIV/AIDS, the increasing number of humanitarian emergencies affecting children and the removal of centrally subsidized safety nets in countries in transition from centrally planned to market-driven economies. To address these and related issues, late in 1997 the Executive Director established a high-level "futures group" that is working to define an agenda for UNICEF for the new century. The work of this group, which is ongoing, will inform the definition of the organization's priorities and identity in the years to come and will be crucial to fund-raising and resource mobilization efforts not only for UNICEF but for the global agenda for children.

14. Good programmes must also be reflected in good donor reports. As stated in the Executive Director's oral report to the first regular session of 1998, contributions management --including improved reporting to donors on the use of both general resources and supplementary funds--is a priority for country offices and UNICEF representatives. To that end, a work plan for contributions management is being finalized, a related training module that is under development will include guidelines on resource mobilization, and the annual briefing for new representatives scheduled for May 1998 will cover these and related issues. Donor reports must show in qualitative terms how progress is being made for children and indicate the specific advantages of UNICEF cooperation in a given area. It

has been suggested that these types of results then be used in large-scale efforts to mobilize additional resources for thematic or regional interventions. It is also expected that the Programme Manager System will allow better management analysis of the effective and efficient use of UNICEF financial resources.

15. As for supplementary funds, the secretariat is prepared to work with the Executive Board to provide clearer information on the basis for the amounts recommended in country programme recommendations (CPRs) for approval for fund-raising efforts, and to report on the amount of these funds received for country programmes during the course of their programme cycles. Country offices are instructed to make realistic supplementary funds proposals, based on the country programme's history of attracting supplementary funding and indicators from potential donors. CPRs submitted to the Executive Board already indicate how the programme will be affected if supplementary funds in the amount approved by the Board are not received. While donors (governmental and others) are always encouraged to give priority to providing core resources, supplementary funds represent an important source of additional revenue that normally cannot be made available as core resources for various reasons. UNICEF has a long tradition of exploring opportunities for supplementary funding from all categories of donors. The Executive Board will have an opportunity to discuss the recovery cost policy for supplementary funds at the second regular session of 1998.

16. Contributions for emergencies are another source of supplementary funds. UNICEF emergency income has varied considerably since 1991 (between $100 million and $200 million per year), depending on the number, severity and visibility of events over the period. The Executive Board's formal agreement on the UNICEF policy and strategy for children in emergencies has enabled the organization to concentrate its efforts and streamline its partnerships to focus specifically on the survival and protection needs of children and women. Nevertheless, the response rate to the UNICEF portion of the inter-agency consolidated appeals ranges between 30 and 50 per cent of stated requirements. Of the contributions which are received, all are limited to a maximum one-year duration despite the protracted nature of the problems being addressed. With a view to enhancing the organization's ability to consistently deliver a predictable set of responses for children in crises, the resource mobilization strategy will examine distinct ways of increasing the level and predictability of resources available for emergency action.

17. Targeted, effective lobbying and advocacy by UNICEF and the National Committees are critical to maintaining the profile necessary for successful fund-raising, whether with Governments or civil society at large. The Programme Funding Office (PFO), with primary responsibility for dealing with donor Governments, maintains and updates profiles of all donor Governments and coordinates UNICEF-wide fund-raising efforts with Governments, including those of UNICEF field offices. Executive Board members have raised a number of issues related to their own ability to provide funding to UNICEF, which are discussed in paragraph 25 below, and the secretariat looks forward to exploring with them ways in which its consultations with Governments may promote more effective resource mobilization for UNICEF.

18. The relationship between UNICEF and civil society is a key responsibility of the 37 National Committees, which contribute almost one third of the organization's income and, to a large extent, are the voice of UNICEF in industrialized countries. The importance of National Committees for resource mobilization, in the past and for the future, is illustrated clearly by this statistic: contributions from National Committees (to general resources and supplementary funds) tripled between 1987 and 1996, while government contributions (to general resources and supplementary funds) grew by less than one half. In addition to raising funds for UNICEF, the Committees play a key role in increasing public awareness about children's and development issues, thus raising the profile of UNICEF in their countries and creating a climate favourable to their Governments' and the public's – continued support for the organization. For example, as reported to the Executive Board at the first regular session of 1998, recent advocacy work by National Committees has focused on child labour, the sexual exploitation of children and land-mines. The Regional Office for Europe has begun a joint strategic planning process by having all secretariat offices working with the Committees review their priorities and activities. That review resulted in new internal mechanisms for collaboration and coordination, clearer procedures for policy guidance and oversight, and priorities for joint planning. These steps will allow the secretariat to provide improved support to the National Committees throughout 1998 and beyond. This issue will be elaborated further in an oral report on the implementation of the policy regarding National Committees to be presented at the annual session.

19. As indicated by the representative of the Standing Group of National Committees at the inter-sessional meeting on 5 March, an issue of concern to the Committees is the development of a corporate policy on private sector partnerships. Corporate partnership guidelines currently are being prepared and will be finalized in consultation with the National Committees. Given its vast potential, the overall relationship between UNICEF and the private sector requires special attention. In recognition of the importance of increasing private sector

revenue, PSD has taken a number of steps to strengthen private sector ties, including the establishment of a new section that is responsible for developing and managing international corporate fund-raising alliances, for example with multinationals, international service clubs and foundations. PSD will work closely with PFO, other divisions and the National Committees to develop further strategies for these new partnerships, including the identification of programmatic themes to focus potential donors' attention on children's needs.

20. Other potential sources of increased funding for UNICEF are the European Union and the international financial institutions. The Regional Director for Europe has informed the Executive Board about the ongoing work of the UNICEF office in Brussels to develop policy dialogue with several Directorates and to improve working relationships on funding issues with the European Union's humanitarian office. However, collaboration with the Union, despite its potential, remains challenging, particularly in administrative terms, for UNICEF and other United Nations agencies. Executive Board members have encouraged closer cooperation with the European Union, including fund-raising, and the secretariat would welcome the advice and assistance of member countries in addressing some of these issues.

21. As for cooperation with the World Bank, a meeting held in Washington, D.C. in late February identified collaborative advantages for UNICEF and the Bank in a number of areas. For example, a working group on post-conflict will focus on landmines, juvenile justice, youth and education. The World Bank is willing to consider financing staff in UNICEF emergency offices, especially in countries moving from conflict to reintegration and resettlement. Already, the Bank has provided $2 million to UNICEF for demobilization and community rehabilitation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A project on education in emergencies is being revised for submission to the Bank's Institutional Grants Facility. In the area of girls' education, collaboration will focus on early childhood care and development, quality education and education as an alternative to child labour. The Bank has agreed to provide a $5 million grant for moving ahead with best practices for girls' education in Southeast Asia.

22. Other areas identified for collaboration include global knowledge networks, sectoral investment programmes (SIPs), monitoring of poverty and progress towards the goals of the World Summit for Children, procurement services and staff exchanges. In addition, as the Executive Director informed the Executive Board in January, a significant new partnership with the World Bank is underway in Yemen, where a joint programme for children has been developed. Under the proposed country programme, which will be submitted to the Board at the second regular session in September, UNICEF would become a collaborating partner with the Government and the Bank for a $30 million loan from the International Development Association. Project components will include community-based schools, with priority on girls' education, early childhood development, decentralized health services and income generation for rural women. A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation programme will include project monitoring and measuring the impact of project interventions.

23. UNICEF and the World Bank will meet bi-annually to review this growing partnership. The Executive Director of UNICEF and the President of the World Bank will send a joint letter to the headquarters and field staff of both agencies to outline the expanded partnership and explain strategies for collaboration. These developments have resulted in the immediate provision of resources for programmes benefiting children, with the potential for further resources. Some of these resources will flow through UNICEF while others will augment the UNICEF contribution. UNICEF will also be able to contribute to the development of SIPs and to lead policy reviews for greater donor coordination on social SIPs, which will give UNICEF wider opportunities to advocate for children.

24. Finally, the secretariat will attempt to show the funding requirements implied by UNICEF programme objectives and its assumptions about governmental and non-governmental contributions in the organization's strategic medium-term plan, which is presented to the Executive Board on a rolling basis every two years, except for the financial plan, which is updated annually. The medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 will be presented to the Executive Board at the second regular session of 1998.

B. Issues for the Executive Board's consideration

25. General Assembly resolution 50/227 and Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/59 stress that it is the responsibility of the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes to monitor and take decisions on their funding arrangements. During the UNICEF Executive Board's discussions of a resource mobilization strategy, during the first regular session of 1998 and at the 5 March inter-sessional meeting, delegations raised a number of issues that would benefit from more detailed consultations between Board members. These include the possibility of setting financial targets for government donors and of negotiated multi-year contributions to UNICEF. The secretariat is willing to work with the Board on ways to address various issues raised, such as burden-sharing, the question of

how to define exactly what is meant by Governments needing to provide the 'bedrock' of core contributions on a sustainable basis and what proportion of the total contribution ensures that UNICEF continues to be characterized as an inter-governmental organization. The secretariat welcomes the suggestion made at the inter-sessional meeting that interested delegations would work together to address these and other issues and looks forward to discussing these consultations.

C. Exploration of new and innovative means to tap non-governmental wealth

26. As indicated in paragraphs 18–19 above, UNICEF is fortunate to have what amounts to 37 'laboratories' for tapping non-governmental wealth in the form of the National Committees for UNICEF. The National Committees are innovative in their fund-raising strategies and experiment with new approaches to working with civil society and generating resources for children. PSD is strengthening further the ability of UNICEF to support the transformation of successful country-level initiatives by the Committees into multi-country or global interventions. These innovative initiatives include "Change for Good", "Check-out for Children", royalty licensing agreements with Flik Flak and Caran D'Arche and, at local level, city partnerships.

27. As the Executive Director indicated in her oral report to the first regular session of the Executive Board, UNICEF is collaborating with the United Nations Trust Fund to make effective use of the funds to be donated by Mr. Ted Turner which, hopefully, will be augmented by donations from other private donors.

28. Another issue that could be addressed is the exploration of new and innovative modalities for funding of continued programme involvement in countries that no longer qualify for allocations from general resources (under the policy approved by the Executive Board in 1997), but where, nonetheless, the experience and expertise acquired by UNICEF could still make significant contributions in terms of advocacy for implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the achievement of the goals of the World Summit for Children.

29. Finally, the secretariat looks forward to additional comments from Executive Board members on the questions posed by the Executive Director in her oral report at the first regular session of 1998, which were also incorporated in the conference room paper prepared for the 5 March inter-sessional meeting. These comments by delegations will provide additional guidance for the preparation of the draft resource mobilization strategy that will be presented to the Board at the second regular session in September 1998. The questions are reproduced below:

(a) How can we better assist you in securing the funding that is essential if, together with other partners, we are to meet the commitments to the world's poorest children as outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the World Summit goals?

(b) What will the impact of United Nations reform be on the resources available to UNICEF and how – together – may we ensure that a positive impact is realized?

(c) Are we canvassing Governments and the private sector in the appropriate places, at appropriate levels and with the appropriate effect?

(d) Has the time come to pursue more vigorously multi-year funding for core resources?

(e) Will accepting large amounts of funds from new and different sources, such as the international financial institutions, challenge the character of UNICEF?

(f) Are there drawbacks in the present functioning of UNICEF which, to your knowledge, limit our resource mobilization capacity?

(g) What can you, as key partners, do to increase your own financial resources for development, and for direct support for children in your own countries?

II. Excerpt from the report of the Executive Board of UNICEF on the work of its 1998 annual session (1-5 June) (E/1998/35 (Part II) - E/ICEF/1998/6 (Part II))

Agenda item 7: Resource mobilization strategy for UNICEF

The Executive Director introduced the report on resource mobilization (E/ICEF/1998/11), highlighting the need for increased predictability, volume and more equitable sharing of the burden of financing UNICEF action on behalf of children. She thanked delegations for informal input to earlier discussions and noted that the document and the summary of these discussions would be transmitted to the Economic and Social Council. She encouraged members to share their views and feedback on issues and questions raised in intersessionals as their input would feed into the preparation of the outline for the resource mobilization strategy to be tabled at the September Board session and approved at the first regular session of 1999. In addition to the efforts of the Board, she noted that an intense effort was under way within the organization to improve the timeliness and quality of reporting, the management of resources at the country level, and the coordination of in-house actors responsible for different aspects of resource mobilization.

Several delegations welcomed the report and expressed appreciation to the secretariat for the concise, timely and well-focused approach taken in the document.

There was broad-based consensus around the need to increase the volume and predictability of the resource base for UNICEF. This was seen as an objective not only in the context of facilitating the planning and management of UNICEF actions in the field, but also as part of a system-wide issue for all the funds and programmes. There were several references to the need for a significant revival of political will in favour of the multilateral system, and a number of delegations said that they wanted to see a more equitable distribution of the financial burden relating to the core budget. The latter issues were fundamental to the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of fund-raising efforts by UNICEF and other funds and programmes.

Responding to questions from the Executive Director regarding what the organization itself could do to enlist donor support, three factors emerged. Firstly, the overriding majority of speakers cited the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of programmes as being the determining factor in resource mobilization. Secondly, major donors highlighted the importance they assigned to being able to "demonstrate development impact" - through better reports, more effective public communication and improved financial systems aimed at addressing accountability issues. Finally, a number of delegations felt that innovation and sustainability were tantamount to captivating new interest and retaining existing donors.

Many delegations agreed on the need to quantify programme needs as a basis for funding targets. Their caveat was simply that targets be set realistically, that priorities be articulated and that UNICEF be able to communicate not only the potential impact of new resources in programmatic terms, but also the detrimental effects of not receiving the requisite resources. Several delegations commended the Executive Director for the initiative taken to prioritize and target the actions required from 1998 to

the year 2000 in an effort to achieve the end-of-the-decade World Summit goals. Other speakers were interested in further details about the process in place to develop the discussion of the Agenda for Children Beyond the Year 2000. Both initiatives were seen as valuable strategic components in the development of a resource mobilization strategy. Several donor Governments highlighted the increasing interest in and value of expressing programme needs in thematic terms and the growing prospects for funding of that nature, but noted that flexibility and institutional capacity would be needed for programming, presenting and managing resources accordingly.

The heart of the discussion centred around mechanisms that would allow the issues of programme targets to be addressed in the same context with adequate, more predictable and equitably shared contributions. In this regard, one delegation proposed that programme targets and administrative budgets be consolidated over a three-year, forward-looking, rolling cycle and presented to the Board for review. At the same time, delegations would be expected to make three-year commitments or indicative pledges, thus allowing the Board itself to link the approval of programme needs with a plan for obtaining resources to carry them out. A number of the major donors to UNICEF expressed support for this proposal, especially the concept of linking programme planning levels with resource commitments. Some donors were able to commit to the idea of multi-year pledges, while others could only agree to providing indicative planning levels beyond one year.

Beyond the pledging process, other mechanisms that had been proposed by the Executive Director in earlier discussions with the Board were referred to in interventions and included the following:

(a) Payment of core funding pledged amount early in the UNICEF fiscal year: almost all donors agreed;

(b) Payment of pledged amounts according to an agreed schedule: this would not be a problem, but in fact, it might not be necessary in many cases as most could agree to pay the full contribution early in the fiscal year;

(c) Agreement to a minimum floor of core contribution: for one or two donors, this was acceptable, while for others it was desirable but impossible since for them it changed the voluntary nature of the pledge and/or more simply their budgeting systems would not allow it;

(d) Payment in United States dollars: this was generally not accepted, although the Executive Director later clarified that the issue was not so much payment in United States dollars as seeking a mechanism that would lead to the reduction of exposure to exchange risks.

Most delegations devoted at least part of their statements to the issue of sources of funding. There was considerable positive feedback and encouragement in response to the question as to whether UNICEF should, in fact, seek closer collaboration and financing with international financial institutions such as the World Bank and regional banks. It was generally felt that as long as the Board was playing a key role in programmes and policy, and UNICEF itself was faithful to its mandate, there was little risk of altering

the character of the organization in any significant way. One delegation cautioned against UNICEF becoming an implementing agent.

Similarly, the Executive Director was encouraged by many delegations to pursue policy dialogue and funding efforts with the European Union. Several delegations offered their support.

The important role of the private sector in the bigger picture of funding sources with growth potential was highlighted by a number of delegations. Several speakers underlined the potential for increasing the levels of private sector funding; however, it was felt that this should keep pace with rather than replace growth from the government side. Many speakers hastened to add, nevertheless, that approximately one third share of the burden now borne by the private sector should not be exceeded significantly if UNICEF was to remain essentially an intergovernmental body. The National Committees themselves underlined the importance of timely and quality reporting, flexibility to move adeptly into thematic funding modalities, the importance of setting priorities and the urgency in issuing guidelines for corporate fund-raising. The Chairman of the Standing Group on National Committees suggested that National Committees could, in fact, commit a fixed proportion of their income to general resources on a multi-year basis.

Funding sources at the country level were mentioned briefly by a few delegations. Some speakers felt that private sector and corporate fund-raising opportunities could be further developed in some developing countries. One donor Government noted that the decentralized decision-making of a number of government donors presented an opportunity for UNICEF staff at the country level to have outreach, involve bilaterals in policy planning and dialogue with Government, and integrate plans more fully with partners on the ground. The implication of donor Government decentralization also would ultimately require increased diligence in contribution management at the country level which, hopefully, the new field office software would address.

Two delegations from developing countries noted the potential to ennance the financial resource base with donations-in-kind and human resources.

Several speakers from recipient countries raised concerns about the need to address the low response rate to emergency appeals, although one did not want emergency funding to detract from development action. A third delegation highlighted the persistent needs of countries in transition which repeatedly fell in the gap between development and emergency.

The Executive Director expressed appreciation to delegations for their comments and particularly their specificity. The secretariat, she said, had taken note of the strong emphasis on the importance to donors of the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of programmes with demonstrable results. It was underlined that everyone in UNICEF played a role in fund-raising, that the secretariat was very conscious of the decentralization of donor decision-making, that National Committees played a key role and, acknowledging this reality, UNICEF was trying to work even more closely with them.

Furthermore, it was noted that as UNICEF moved into new markets with different kinds of customers, it was required to tailor its efforts

differently. Hence, customer relations was assuming increasing importance. This meant decreasing the bureaucracy and streamlining processes with the objective of increasing efficiency.

To some extent, the issue of burden share was being addressed in the diversification away from traditional donors to new corporate and private sector donors, with Change for Good, Caran d'ache, Flic Flac and Merck cited as examples. Corporate relationships at the country level also were developing, and partnerships with service organizations such as Rotary International and Kiwanis were being reinforced.

Responding to questions on the flex-team on resource mobilization, delegations were advised that it had been transformed into an interdivisional working group on resource mobilization of concerned division heads. It would meet regularly to address issues raised by the team as well as ongoing cross-cutting themes such as developing the relationship with the European Union, emergency fund-raising and using the Internet as a fund-raising vehicle.